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Prem Nath Bhat
Ananthnag

TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

MYSTICISM is an approach to Truth and Reality, which can be negatively indicated as non-logical. It is opposed to thinking by categories and is, in this sense, different from Philosophy. Philosophy arises from an intellectual demand of consistent thinking; Mysticism arises from the demand of Life and Spirit. Philosophy is an approach to Truth through thinking. Mysticism is an approach to Truth through life and experience. 'Living is more than thinking.'[1] 'Mysticism is, in truth, a temper rather than a doctrine, an atmosphere rather than a system of philosophy'[2]. Deep in our consciousness is a demand for truth, and when this demand is not satisfied by the dissecting process of intellect, a form of direct apprehension emerges and that can be called mystic Intuition.

Mysticism is 'the type of religion which puts the emphasis on the immediate awareness of

[1] *Vide* H. C. King, *Theology and Social Consciousness*, quoted in *Studies in Mystical Religion* by R. M. Johnes.

[2] *Vide* C. F. E. Spurgeon's *Mysticism in English Literature*, p. 2.

relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the divine presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense and living stage.'[1] 'Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or more generally, as the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal and of the eternal in the temporal.' Goethe says, 'It is the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings.'[2]

Mysticism appeals by its simplicity. It also repels because of this simplicity. It is anxious to free the mind from the set forms of thinking, and it goes direct into the inmost recesses of our being. It is simple, and it is difficult. It is simple, because it can immediately apprehend the essence of being if the mind can forego its makeshift notions. It is difficult, because the objective mind is habituated to limitations of concepts and categories and cannot always rise beyond them to an expanded receptivity. Man is impressed by stresses of life, external and

[1] Vide *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. xv, Introduction.
[2] *Vide* W. R. Inge's *Christian Mysticism*.

internal, and the more he can receive in his wise passivity the impression of the life-stream in the silence of being, the more is the possibility of his entering into the wonderful mysteries of life. Philosophizing is, in a sense, opposed to such intimate apprehension and penetration which cannot be fostered by analytic consciousness. The mystic has a hyper-sensitive being which makes it a fit vehicle for supernormal expressions. The mystic has a vantage ground, he draws his inspiration from the depth of his being which is not otherwise accessible. Hence the mystic is not always appreciated, his message is far less believed and understood. The mystic makes a demand upon our implicit acceptance, not because he intends to give a false guidance,—which is not his way—but because he knows that life can be lived but not understood; understanding comes after living. The illumination, which it promises, follows the art of life. Science can be taught, but not art. Art is imbibed by influence and example. Science gives system, mysticism, illumination.

It had long been a fashion to note a discordance between knowledge and faith, as if the two fundamental faculties of the human soul were conflicting in their method and verdict. A

this contradiction made headway in the seventeenth century with the advent of rationalistic and empiricistic thinkers in Europe. This discord is now vanishing, and mysticism is on the point of re-affirming itself.

There should not be such a discordance between the claims of faith and knowledge. It arises only because the mystic spirit cannot exhibit itself in its fineness and subtlety unless the soul is cosmically tuned. A possession rare among mortals! Few can claim that delicate being which can fruitfully record the impressions of super-consciousness. And when impressions from such heights of consciousness are given out, few can understand their importance and significance. Naturally the dictum goes forth that knowledge is opposed to faith. In the history of Western philosophy faith has long been divorced from knowledge. This conflict between knowledge and faith has done harm to both the parties to the combat. Knowledge has been divorced from the dynamic force of faith; faith suffers a limitation from the illuminating influence of knowledge. But in reality this conflict does not obtain for a moment in the depth of our being where faith is illuminated by wisdom and wisdom is strengthened by faith. The approach may

be different, but when they dive deep, they embrace the same truth. Prof. Alexander has almost the same conclusion when he says, 'Religion leans on metaphysics for the justification of its indefeasible conviction of the reality of its object; philosophy leans on religion to justify it in calling the possession of deity by the religious name of God. The two methods of approach are, therefore, complementary.'[1] No doubt, knowledge has this advantage over faith that it can set its affirmation in a clear-cut way, whereas faith by its very method and height of approach has not always an appealing force. Its affirmations cannot be understood unless the being is quickened by it and life feels a fresh flow of vitality by its influence.

The divergence once felt in Europe is now melting away with the advent of the vitalistic, romantic and intuitionistic schools of philosophy. An appreciable wave of mysticism is sweeping over the Continent and America.

The soul has, according to the Dean of St. Paul's 'an organ or faculty for the discernment of spiritual truths, which, in its proper sphere, is as

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. ii, pp. 342–43.

much to be trusted as the organs of sensation in theirs'. He pleads for a special faculty and the gradual approximation to the divine nature in man.[1]

Mystic intuition 'is not dreaming', 'because the subject is awake'. It is not 'hallucination', because there is no organic disturbance. 'It appears that the act of contemplation is for the mystic a psychic gateway' . . . 'There is developed in some men another sort of consciousness, another 'sense'. 'This "sense" has attachments at each point to emotion, to intellect, and to will. It can express itself under each of the aspects which these terms connote. Yet it differs from and transcends the emotional, intellectual, and volitional life of ordinary men. It was recognized by Plato as that consciousness which could apprehend the real world of the ideas.' . . . 'It is called by Plotinus another intellect, different from that which reasons and is denominated rational.'

[1] *Vide* W. R. Inge's *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 6, 7, 8.
Vide Professor A. S. Eddington's *Science and the Unseen World*, p. 46.
The mystic recognizes another faculty of consciousness and accepts as significant the vista of a world outside space and time that it reveals.

'Mysticism is not a theory of the intellect or a hunger, however passionate of the heart; but a definite and peculiar development of the whole self . . . a remaking of the whole character on high levels in the interests of the transcendental life.'[1]

'Knowledge', says Plotinus, 'has three degrees, opinion, science and illumination. The means or instrument of the first is sense, of the second dialectic, of the third, intuition. To the last I subordinate Reason. It is absolute knowledge founded on the identity of the mind knowing with the object known.'[2] A profounder saying can hardly be conceived. The soul must open the gate of intuition and faith before the flood of light can stream into it.

In Indian thought mysticism has its rightful place and science has not been divorced from it. Knowledge and faith are not in conflict.[3] Indian philosophy has been essentially an attempt at thinking what is conveyed to humanity through intuitions.[4] This is equally true of the heretic

[1] *Vide* E. Underhill's *Mysticism*, pp. 21–25.
[2] *Vide* Plotinus, *Letters to Flaccus*.
[3] Vide *Gīta*, x. 10 ; xiv. 26 ; xiii. 22.
[4] Vide *Katha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 12 ; II. v. 13.

and the believers, for except the Lokāyata school, no school of serious philosophy in India has denied the claim of intuition to truth. Indian philosophy has never cut itself loose from life by fully occupying itself in Logisticism. No doubt, the means sometimes became the end in mediæval times. But the end has not been altogether lost sight of, though its note has not been equally dominating in all ages. The contradiction between philosophy and mysticism is, therefore, not so much pronounced in India. Indian mind is intuitive first, ratiocinative next. The Indian method appeals to authority, reason and intuition. Authority has a decisively different meaning from opinion. Conformity among the declarations of the possible sources of knowledge is always insisted upon, and when they agree the result is satisfactory and the proof convincing.

Mysticism may be either *pre-reflective* or *post-reflective*. The latter emerges when the limitations of reason are realized, and truth is sought in supra-sensuous intuition. Reason may give a convincing dialectic, still the face-to-face knowledge of truth is not possible without intuition. The former does not require any philosophic training and is a natural gift with rare mortals. Their being is so attuned that they can have

immediate apprehension without a *pre-philosophic* instruction.[1]

Human consciousness is complex and specific differences make headway which enrich the mystic life. And the different forms of mysticism mentioned in the Gītā,—philosophic, devotional, practical and contemplative—are due to the diverse phases of our conscious life. Mysticism does not read life in parts. It views the whole of it and does not leave even the slightest and the most insignificant thing out of consideration. It sees life in its soaring transcendence and in concrete details. This is the great advantage of the mystic approach. It quickens every chord of our being and affords an opportunity to understand and appreciate it in a new light not always available. And at times the influence works so quickly that it does not always become possible to record all the phases of revelation. The Gītā appeals by the presentation of all the phases of mystic life in its concreteness and shows clearly how in every turn, life dwells in its habitual plane and yet soars into the expanse. The end

[1] Both these forms meet us in the history of Indian mysticism. The natural intuition of Vāmadeva illustrates the second type, and the dissertation of Yājñavalkya on ātma and the mystic intuition represents the first type. (Vide *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I. vi. 13; II. iv. 5.)

of mysticism is not only to give a glimpse of truth, but also to effect a transformation of the individual to make him a fit vehicle for the transmission of divine life. The Gītā aims at the realisation of this concrete divine life in every finite being. He must be moved by the oscillations of the cosmic life. The direct aim is to break through the sense of limitations and to open the floodgate of divine life and energy to the fit, enabling them to shape the world-process to cosmic ends. The Gītā links the silence of transcendence to the active stirrings of life. It is a departure from the ancient mysticism of the Upaniṣads, and in this it has its own problem. It, therefore, allows the greatest activity with the least bondage to the demands of the personal self and as such establishes that mystic calm which is necessary to the realization of the still higher life and consciousness.

A word about grace and its relation to the mystical consciousness.

Mystical consciousness has different types and degrees. This is recognized in the Gītā in the possible forms of spiritual discipline and in the preferment of the theory of election through grace. The different forms of self-discipline endows the soul with some powers, but the

complete fruition of mystic consciousness is not possible without grace. Any form of self-directed effort, however potential, cannot bring in consummation.

Two theories are possible:[1]

(1) Mystical consciousness can be desired and attained through self-discipline and culture.

(2) Mystical favours are bestowed by Grace and cannot be desired, far less obtained.

Both these theories contain elements of truth; mystical graces are desired and can be desired. Such impelling and self-discipline can give

[1] Two opinions are prevalent in current mystic literature:

"(1) Mystical favours are not comprised in the ordinary providence of God over His elect. There are ways and means of attaining, by the help of divine grace to perfect self-abnegation; it would be an illusion to seek or desire those which lead to the mystical union of contemplatives."

"(2) Others hold that mystical graces are those immanent graces which are presented by God to the Faithful. If we have known how to dispose ourselves thereto and have been faithful in doing so, these graces will illuminate our soul with clear light and obtain for it perfect love. It is no wise contrary to humility to desire perfect knowledge and perfect love of God, therefore there is nothing more praiseworthy than to desire the mystical graces."

The difference lies in a single point 'aspirations for mystical consciousness'. Aspiration, according to the first theory, is opposed to humility and grace.

finer experiences but cannot lead to the unitive consciousness unless the adept is carried by divine Grace. Divine possession can be vouchsafed by Grace. Any preparation however high and any penetration however deep cannot reveal the secrets of divine life unless the soul is specially elected. When Mercy descends in the soul, the cover of ignorance is finally removed. Grace, and not any form of human endeavour, can tear the veil and free the soul. Grace permeates the whole being in its descent, and transforms it, provided there is not the least reserve in any part of our being.

Psychology of mystic consciousness clearly

According to the second theory it is not. (*Vide* Auguste Sandream, *The Mystical State, Its Nature and Phases*, Author's preface, p. 5.)

In Indian mystic literature also such opinions are prevalent. In the Katha Upaniṣād we have it 'Yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ'. Two interpretations have been put upon the passage. 'The elect can have it.' 'The elector can have it.' The former makes mystical consciousness completely dependent upon grace, the latter, upon search and preparation. And the text 'dhatuḥprasādān mahimānamātmanaḥ' hās a double meaning.

Rupa Gosvamī, a follower of Caitanya, in recognizing two forms of devotional consciousnes—Vaidhī and Rāgānugā (sanctioned and spontaneous) has drawn a distinction between the types of mystic consciousness. The former type can be reared up by spiritual discipline and preparation, the latter is the gift of God Himself.

indicates that the soul receives more in silence, more by denial than by seeking. Seeking is an impelling which has its service in the life of the novitiate but which surely is not serviceful in the adept. 'Seek and find' is helpful on the threshold of mystic life. 'Seek not and find' is conducive to the complete fruition. Mystical consciousness is a gift of the silence of being. The more our inner being is free from all forms of impelling including even the impelling of religious consciousness, the more we can receive. Even religious impelling creates ripples in the quiet of being and disturbs that equilibrium which is the *sine qua non* of all mystical penetration.

At this high altitude of consciousness we get before seeking, for we transcend activities of reasoned mentality and have an access to the realm of the super-mind.

Apart from these psychological implications, there is an element of truth in the doctrine of election. But election is not an arbitrary choice. It requires a high preparation and a superior mentality to have Mercy drop down into the soul. The greatest psychological condition accessory to such a possession, is, as already pointed out, a complete self-effacement and humility consequent on the consciousness that

even the wisest man cannot have the mystical penetration unless he is helped otherwise.

The Gītā in its mystic ideal has not accentuated the 'sleeping of powers' while the soul is possessed of mystical favours. In the 'sleeping of powers' the soul 'neither sees nor hears' nor does it 'understand'[1]. The Gītā, on the other hand, is expressly of opinion that the mystic life is essentially the quickening of powers. In the beginning of the mystic life, when the initiate has not experienced mystic influence, a complete passivity is agreeably helpful in fostering mystic consciousness. But this can be only a transient stage in mystic life; and when once the divine influence has taken full possession of the soul, the influence can no longer be confined to the soul in its silent chamber, but must spread throughout the whole being to make it a medium of effective expression. The senses, and the understanding do not lose their power, though they undergo transformation under mystic

[1] Vide *The Mystical State*, p. 38:
'When there is union of all the powers, these are unable to act, the mind seems to be stunned, the will loves more than it understands, but it cannot understand sufficiently to give an account of it, whether it does love or what it is doing.'

influence.[1] Receptivity and activity co-mingle under its influence; the minutest part of our being becomes highly receptive and sharply active.

The soul feels no stunning influence in any part of its being, though it has before it the full revelation of and clear realization of unitive consciousness. This becomes possible only when the mystic influence permeates through our being and the opposition between 'nature' and 'spirit' completely melts away.

To my esteemed friend Professor Upendranath Gupta, M.A., of the Dacca University I am indebted for his painstaking labours bestowed upon a portion of the manuscript, and to my colleague Professor Kṛṣṇadhan Bannerjee, M.A., I am grateful for his revising the proofs. My thanks are also due to Professor Man Govindo Banerjee, M.A. of Ranchi and to Mr. Jehangir Chubb of Bombay, for their reading the proofs.

JANMASTAMI, 1929. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR.

[1] Vide *The Supersensual Life.* By Jacob Boehme, p. 7, lines 25–28:

'The Eternal Hearing, Seeing and Speaking will be revealed in thee.'

CONTENTS

MYSTICISM IN BHAGAVAT GITA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Arjuna's Perplexity—The Possibility of Revelation—Importance of the Gītā—Master's Teachings—The Touch and the Conversion—The Character of the Teachings—Teachings.

ARJUNA'S PERPLEXITY

TO the mystic more than to the philosopher the Gītā appeals by the situation in which it was delivered, no less than by its message. The mystic knows that a divine message which has a mighty potency is revealed in a situation which appears a perplexity. It baffles rational attempt at a solution. The prevailing moral and spiritual code proves an insufficient guide and an inadequate adviser. The perplexed conscience seeks the answer within its own dicta and imperatives, but finds no way that can adequately solve the complex issues that disturb the ordered life and its rational basis.

Such a perplexity of conscience troubles Arjuna when he is asked to fight his own kith and kin. His mighty intellect can find no solution. He is in utter helplessness. The 'man' in him rises in revolt against the thought of fighting for insignificant dominion. He can find no way. The task that appears simple to the common intelligence is a mighty one for Arjuna. The problem that is not tasking for the mean intelligence appears almost insoluble to Arjuna. And naturally so. The unthinking mind hastens the decision. It moves on in the natural course in the line of least resistance. The adaptation becomes, therefore, quite ego-centric. The thinking mind in such a situation would weigh the pros and cons of a victory and would accept it as a happy chance that might be fruitful in establishing the right of the weak and vanquished in the struggle of life. The idea of establishing an empire, of righting the long-suffered wrongs by turning the scale of events against his kinsmen, short-sighted and ill-advised, might have been a glory to lesser spirits. These promises could not satisfy Arjuna and cheer him for the struggle.

The perplexity of Arjuna is not the perplexity that rises from the conflict between the higher and the lower in man, it is not the conflict

between the claims of ego-centric and eccentric impulses. It is not the conflict between love and hate. Nor is it the conflict between the weak and the strong. The weak man in such a situation would have sent the writ of surrender. The 'strong' man of Nietzche would have silently contemplated the courses to victory. Both of them would have come immediately to a decision. But such an indecisiveness speaks of Arjuna's complete mental perplexity; he is confused and nothing could satisfy him and save him from the situation.

The moral breakdown of Arjuna has in it an appealing pathos. But such a sight of moral paralysis often excites an ill-conceived vein in the lesser minds which have not met moral crosses in life and which have not to face similar situations. The sufferings which the Paṇdavas met with at the hands of the Kauravas, the situation which they were put to, the long years of miseries, insults and losses to which they were subjected, led but to one conclusion in such a situation; and one is amazed at Arjuna's moral paralysis at the psychological moment.

Such is the general conclusion where the life is stirred by the ethical doctrine, hate for hate, love for love. Arjuna cannot be so low, nor

can he stand a mere sight-seer of the grievous wrongs; nor can he have the airy and transcendental attitude of throwing such actualities of life to the winds. His is, therefore, a perplexity deep-seated in the soul from which he can find no easy pass. The fight that is in sight appears a child's affair before the fights and the inflicts in the inward soul. And if the inward perplexity has not a swift decision, the hero looks small in the face of the imperative action. Unless Arjuna can get out of the inner conflict he must necessarily wait for the illuminating light. And wait he does. Arjuna is in need of a compelling force.

The intellectual conventions might at times convince, but such convictions are of no avail if they are not backed by the compelling force of spirit. Intellect cannot compel, for it lacks the illumination and the decision of the spirit. Spirit compels because of its right illumination and ready decision. Arjuna is badly in need of an illumination before he can have a ready decision. His searching soul is anxious to catch the ray of the light that wanes not, of the spirit that flags not.

Though the perplexity of conscience has the momentary effect of paralysing all activities, yet

it has in the case of the fit the beneficent result of waking up the soul. The deeper the conflict, the greater is the illumination. The message of the Gītā is appealing, for a greater perplexity of conscience cannot be conceived. Light comes to those that look up for it. Arjuna represents the type to whom truth has always been revealed, for the patient and the resigned alone can see.

The perplexity of Arjuna presents in a magnified form the perplexity through which humanity is every day passing, and the message which Arjuna receives has a meaning for the struggling soul. The Gītā in this sense is a message to humanity, and the teachings it delivers are of universal application. The catholicity and the universality of the teachings are the most marked and appealing feature of the Gītā.

But its message can be hardly understood unless the seeker has the perplexity of Arjuna and the deep stirring of his soul, for the philosophy which life receives and feels is not always the same, and the mood which dictates an epicurean ideal can hardly read the meaning of the Gītā. When man stands between life and death, when his aching soul has no rest, when his faculties almost fail to give him a guidance, then only in a happy moment illumination dawns. Such

illuminations are rare, and save and except the moment of their first flashes, their meaning afterwards may not be fully comprehended and understood. The depth of the soul is not always stirred and the light is not always focussed in the mind.

If the situation perplexes the disciple, it inspires the Master, and the message is delivered. If Arjuna is perplexed and depressed, the Master is inspired by the gravity of the situation and he rises to the height demanded by it; and he delivers a message which enthuses the spirit by the boldness of its conception and the loftiness of its ideal. We are told that on another occasion and under happier auspices, Arjuna asks the Master to repeat the message. The Master cannot do it.[1] And the inspiration has not the same pitch. The situation is changed. Inspiration has rare visits under telling circumstances. And the circumstances that face the Master and the disciple on the battle ground of Kurukshetra, are unique, the requirement is big, and naturally under a less telling moment life has not the same need and consciousness hardly the same intuition and illumination.

[1] Vide *Māhābhārat*, *Anuśāsana parva*, ch. xvii.

THE POSSIBILITY OF REVELATION

The mystic soul doubts not the possibility of such a revelation under such a situation, the high wisdom and the lofty illumination in the din of the battle! But this has induced some recent writers on the Gītā to regard it as an ethical philosophy rather than a message actually delivered in the battlefield. Accurate history can only testify to the reality or otherwise of the occurrence. But there is no impossibility, far less an improbability of such a message being delivered under such circumstances. The mystic knows that the highest illumination of the soul comes under the most trying circumstances, and through the dark corners of the heart streaks out the brightest light of the soul. The mystic feels that the more unfavourable the circumstances, the more free is the life within. The captain pilots the boat through the rough waves of the sea. The darker forces of nature must be swayed down before the bright ones can be active. Evolution in life means such a struggle and such a fight. Fight is the law of life, and in each fight, be it within or without, the soul has an evolution in spirit, for unless the soul has a higher vision and loftier ideal, it cannot present the fight to the lower

nature; and before the soul can have the end in view, it must fight through.

And seen in proper light fights, inward and outward, have the same meaning; they require the same illumination. The only difference is that in the inward fight the soul has to struggle against nature's forces planted within, obstructing the growth and the fruition of spiritual life in individual; and in the outward fight it has to struggle against the reactionary forces of nature which stand against establishing the order of righteousness on earth. Incessant is the demand both in and out for establishing the harmony and peace of spiritual life.

And if, therefore, in the case of Arjuna the fight was outward, it must not be thought as possessing little or no spiritual value. Spirituality is not confined within, it is equally active in establishing outwardly a righteous order, a holy communion. Spirituality is not exclusive and does not thrive in isolation. It requires agreeable surroundings. Spiritual life is a delicate plant, it draws in the sap of its life, the juice of its growth from within as well as from without. A truly spiritual life cannot be indifferent to the play of forces outside. The perspective is partial and incomplete when the spiritual life is sought to be

fostered in isolation and in complete indifference to the social environment. Hügel rightly observes 'there exist simply no acts and affections which, however right, however obligatory, however essential to the perfection of us all or some of us, do not require on our own part, a certain alternation of interior reserve and detachment away from, and of familiarity and attachment to them and their objects.[1]

And therefore in spiritual life, nothing loses its meaning, spiritual insight perceives the unity of life as working in individual and society and readily feels the interaction and mutual reciprocity of the two. The illumination brings before Arjuna the common meaning of life and the unity of the pulse that throbs within and without. And Arjuna has the vividness and clarity of feeling that the least thing that disturbs the spiritual and moral equilibrium of society cannot but affect the inward equilibrium of the soul, if the spirit is not dead and the soul is not blind.

Spiritual life in its initiation is necessarily an incessant activity to adjust the outward forces to a harmony and equilibrium that can foster the

[1] Vide *Readings from* Friedrich von Hügel, p. 63.

fruition of spiritual life of the individual and the race. And when social forces retard the growth of such a life, spirit-forces array against those blind forces and fight them out. Such a fight is an inevitable consequence of a divided life and a precursor of a higher evolution in holiness and spirituality.

The outward fight, therefore, recognizes the importance of the influence of the outward forces on inward life, and the sensitive souls of the mystics and their catching power cannot fail to cognize the unity of life irrespective of the divisions of space and time. The forces that do not touch careful and cautious souls disturb the mystic and make him astir to adjust them in proper relations and graduated hierarchy. The mystic is the boldest fighter, for he is the greatest seer; and he is not content unless he fights to a finish and concentrates all forces to establish a harmony within and a righteous order without. Life in the words of Lloyd Morgan is essentially 'receiving influences and sending forth references'. This is true of mystic life as well. There only the influences are wide and complex, and references highly integrative and far-reaching in consequences. The mystic is a practical dualist at the initiation, he is a theoretical monist

in the end, as he feels the stir in nature and man as finally the urge of divine life.

Life is activity and adaptation. The mystic life is swift and sure activity and unfailing adaptation. The mystic is sensitive to all influences, great and small, and he understands them in reference to the cosmic order and is ceaselessly active to adjust them, so that the divine purpose may fulfil itself and the divine order may establish itself.

The mystic actually sees and feels the beauty and mystery of life. He feels and enjoys the finer touches of a subtler consciousness, and in every new move of life he realizes a new meaning and feels a new wave of delight. The mystic is an optimist in every sense of the term. Life he enjoys, life he lives; he moves from finer to finer expressions of life, and the more he sees of it, the more he gains faith, the more he is secure in hope. The mystic sees not through intellect but through intuition, and even under the most untoward circumstances his intuition does not fail him. Adaptation in his case never fails, it becomes more accurate and easy under the illuminating influence of the soul. Life and philosophy are in him combined as they always really are, for a true philosophy does not

separate itself from life and a true life from philosophy.

If such is the ease with which the mystics can adapt themselves, there can be no reason why under the most trying circumstances the highest illumination should not take place, for knowledge is necessary for adaptation in life and the more trying the circumstances, the greater is the illumination and swifter the action.

IMPORTANCE OF THE Gītā

Naturally the situation and the circumstances under which the Gītā is revealed add to its importance and attractiveness. It is regarded as containing in it the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The familiar saying is 'the Upaniṣads are the milch cows, the Gītā the milk.' Whether or not the Gītā contains the teachings of the Upaniṣads or has something new to teach, it is undoubtedly looked upon with deep reverence for its lofty and inspired message. The rhythm and the cadence of its beautiful poetry match its sublime teachings, and when we see such sublime philosophy taught with such ease and grace of language we cannot but appreciate its dignity as an inspired teaching. Its beauty of casṭ is a

fine accommodation to the spirit within and 'all beauty', as Walter Pater has it 'is in the long run only fineness of truth'.[1] Its dignity and attractiveness are intensified by the unique circumstances of its revelation. Its teachings have had a wide influence and every Hindu teacher worthy of the name has had his say upon the Gītā. The divine song has a hallowed association and an undoubted authority. Scholars have expressed the opinion that the Gītā has layers of meaning still unrevealed and unexpressed, for it is not only a philosophy intellectually conceived but a message inspired; and unless one has the animating touch of inspiration and the quickening of mystic apprehension, one has no chance of realizing the full meaning of the Gītā. To explain the message by a preconceived categorical setting is to miss its true import. But this has been actually the practice with the commentators. They read their pet theories in the Gītā. Thus every school claims support from the Gītā for its teachings.

We confess that the Gītā is a philosophy of life and does not preach any intellectual system bound up in categories. It recognizes the importance of everything that has a claim upon life

[1] Walter Pater, *Appreciations of Style.*

and its adaptation and is thus an attempt at a synthesis. It has not given its support to this or that particular theory. It has freely taken from the systems and freely conceived a theory of life and its philosophy. In this it is an approach aiming at and synthesizing the scattered and dispersed truths of the ancient systems of thought. The Gītā appeals by its synthetic construction.

THE MASTER'S TEACHINGS

The Master is moved to compassion at this pitiable confusion of the disciple. Nothing can more disturb the poise of the Master than the sight of a struggling life anxious to catch the light. The mystic knows that the Divine compassion is reserved for those who wait and stir not, who struggle but find not. The 'look up' to the Master, to the inward light is immediately followed by illumination. In the economy of the divine nature the law stands always fulfilled. 'Ask and you shall find', 'knock and it shall be opened'.

The searching soul cannot long remain in darkness and when the human powers fail the light streams forth out of the Divine compassion, and the soul then has the new light to remove

doubts and the new forces to meet the situation. Divine life is illuminated vision and heightened activity. It infuses light and life.

THE TOUCH AND THE CONVERSION

The Master delivers his message, but an intellectual appeal cannot stir Arjuna to action. The Master feels the disciple's stupefaction. The requirement of the situation cannot be met by an intellectual illumination. Action proceeds from faith and conviction. Faith awaits illumination, and Arjuna cannot stir unless his finer being is touched and transformed. Intellect may convince, but cannot compel.

When the Master realizes that the intellectual appeal can be of no avail, he vouchsafes unto the disciple the mystic illumination.[1] The genial touch gives the illuminating vision and the disciple is changed. The limitations of intellect and the scruples of conscience no longer trouble him. He feels their imperfection and limitation. They are faculties of the man and not of the spirit. They cannot carry the seeker far. However masterful the intellect may be, however dignified the

[1] *Vide* the *Gītā*, xi. 8, and Saṁkara's and Svāmi's commentaries thereupon.

conscience, they labour under inherent limitations as organs of the finite soul. They naturally fail to give a lead to Arjuna in so conflicting a situation. The Master's teachings even cannot help him, for their meaning cannot be fully understood. On the contrary they seem so conflicting that instead of accepting them Arjuna can without the least hesitation throw them to the winds. A high philosophy and a deadly action are hardly compatible, and Arjuna could advance contrary and counter-suggestions, had he been merely intellectually impressed. Intellect is never slow in raising issues and throwing doubts. The doubts which are so natural to Arjuna cannot be removed by mere intellectual illumination. The disciple is still helpless and gives himself up utterly to the Master. This utter resignation to the powers of Mercy at once makes the beneficent forces active. The Divine in the Master is moved to activity which quickens the vision and stimulates the understanding. The light goes forth and the conversion takes place. Arjuna is simply amazed at the illumination. His being is completely overpowered. The magnitude of the light he receives makes him completely silent and he puts his services ungrudgingly at his Master's disposal.

This conversion is the central theme of the Gītā. The Gītā would have lost its charm and significance, had it not inculcated the theory of conversion of the searching soul and the radiation of new light from it. Arjuna's is a new birth in spirituality. He transcends the fetters of 'natural' intelligence, his anthropo-centric vision has been replaced by cosmo-centric insight, and he is now quite willing to carry out the cosmic end which Kṛṣṇa has in vision.

To the mystic the Gītā appeals by the conversion of Arjuna, for in this the Gītā fulfils the mystic demand. In the absence of Arjuna's conversion the Gītā would have been a philosophic, but not a mystic treatise, for the mystic is anxious not so much for philosophy—and where is the man who has not a philosophy of his own—as for inner illumination and inward force, before which no doubt can disturb the intellectual poise, no obstruction can prevent the action and defeat the purpose. This conversion makes Arjuna a power and a match for the forces that are arrayed against him. Arjuna now moves with the divine impulse and force and the whole affair appears before him as a play, and he proceeds from victory to victory.

The teachings that the Gītā delivers lose their charm, beauty and force for the unilluminated consciousness. To the illuminated vision the Gītā has depths of meaning too difficult for the common intelligence to reveal. The mystic teaching might not appeal and excel by the niceties of categories, but surely it is an appealing force when it vivifies the intellect and helps to see significant meanings in insignificant things. Herein lies the chief attraction for mysticism and the sudden conversion of Arjuna and the intense fight he puts up by recovering from lassitude and passivity are surely appealing in their contrasts. The mystic makes his way through the deep abyss of darkness and in the midst of pitchy darkness he is often held up by the streak of light that deceives not; and in the surrounding gloom and the depression of spirit the soul feels itself rejuvenated fresh with new vibrations of life and consciousness. The mystic has to pass through such conflicts being almost overpowered in the struggle of life, but ultimately the success is his, if he follows the direction of the light that does not deceive him and fail him in the struggle. Arjuna has in him the virtues of a disciple and a mystic. He combines in him the highest illumination and the

intensest action. The mystic is a seer and a doer. Arjuna becomes both by the conversion.[1]

THE CHARACTER OF THE TEACHINGS

Mystical writers are generally of two kinds. One kind is exclusively confined to the task of describing his personal and inner experiences of the soul in a state of contemplation. He is always in his subjective mood and scarcely deflects from his dominant subjective and receptive attitude. He is deep with his own experiences, he enjoys them and is not anxious to give them out and systematize them in a theory. This type anxiously clings to the finer feelings and subtler delights and is absorbed in them. He does not like a break in the mystic gratification and blessedness.

But the other kind cannot remain confined in his subjective and personal experiences. He is anxious to give exact descriptions of his visions and to read their philosophic meaning and metaphysical import. He enjoys but is not lost in the delight and is not indifferent to the light that mysticism throws on the philosophic conception of life. He is not satisfied with

[1] *Vide* the *Gīta*, x. 10, 11.

a traditional philosophy and an inherited faith. He is restive, on the other hand, to build up the basis of a constructive philosophy and to establish the foundations of a firm faith in the light of his inner vision. The first type may be called subjective and devotional, and the second type, objective and philosophic.[1] Mysticism is the heightening up of life and consciousness, and the different types originate from the characteristic tendencies lying deep down in the soul which are quickened by the mystic touch. Such heightened activity of an originally strong tendency has the invariable effect, if not of completely silencing, at least of partially checking the blossoming of the quieter powers of the soul. Happily the mysticism that has been taught in the Gītā does not seek to quicken some faculty at the cost of others. Here we meet the metaphysical insight of the philosopher and the sympathetic vision of the poet, and we are struck by the symbols which the master uses and which are derived from the ideas common to philosophy and mystic theology. The Gītā meets the demands of the philosopher, the poet and the mystic. It attracts by its sublime teachings.

[1] Vide *Rusybroeck*, by Underhill.

graceful expressions and ecstatic visions. True philosophy has its origin in vision and intuition, for the height which intuition can reach is not accessible to reason. The Gītā is the book of intuition, as it soars higher and higher to subtler realizations and points out the way to the same. Its philosophy, therefore, is not discursive thinking but involves visions which are to be systematized by mystic insight and intuitive penetration. To read any particular later development of thought in the Gītā will be an inadequate method of its interpretation. Its teachings are to be appreciated more by an appeal to the degrees of self-realization as revealed in the different forms of approach inculcated in the different mystic methods than by a demand for a logical consistency and dialectic penetration. The Gītā is intended essentially to communicate to the disciple the inner secrets of life, and to this end it is more anxious to lay bare the different layers of mystic consciousness than to put forth a systematic philosophy.

The Gītā has reviewed the methods of search pursued in the earlier philosophy and has not completely accepted or rejected them. It has studied their influence upon life and measured their exact and respective values. It has clearly

discerned how far they fit in with spiritual life in its fine expression and wherein they fall short. And ultimately it has been successful in synthesizing the visions which are the partial presentations of truth. It does not emphasize this or that function of the soul and the approach to truth in its light. It reads the importance of every function and sees its economy in the spiritual life. In the harmony and unison of spiritual life each has a part to play.

This synthetic insight and sympathetic vision made it possible for the master to appreciate the values of different forms of spiritual discipline in the evolution of our spiritual life. The Gītā, to an unthinking mind, may appear as an eclectic attempt anxious to reconcile the claims of the irreconcilable tendencies of the soul. But the Master, super-mystic as he is, can see the values of those tendencies and can graduate them in a hierarchy leading to the full fruition of spiritual life. To the illuminated spirit the apparent eclecticism disappears and the teachings appear to be consistent or rather coherent parts of a systematic whole. Logic may trace minor contradictions but the revelation of spirit transforms the realistic logic in its favour. The immobility of realistic consciousness may put in difficulties

and point out contradictions but the elasticity of idealistic vision goes beyond their limitations and gets over their contradictions. The Gītā works out a highly synthetic philosophy and traces out its bearing on the concrete adaptations of life. The philosophy that the Gītā works out and the vision that it inspires are put to practical application in the adaptation of life. The good has found a place with the true, and the true has not been sacrificed at the altar of the good. The claims and the values of the true and the good have been perceived in the concrete spiritual life, and their importance has been insisted upon in the full fruition of spiritual life. The Gītā feels the subtler influences of the spiritual life in all its aspects and has thus thrown out the spiritual ideal which satisfies the ends of truth, the requirement of devotion, and the fulfilment of the good.

TEACHINGS

The central teaching of the Gītā, like that of the Upaniṣads, is confined to the Brahman, the Being, the conception of the transcendence and immanence, for it upholds with the Upaniṣads the common belief that the highest end is realized through the knowledge of the Absolute, and the greatest consummation is the

quietude in Brahman, 'which sets doubt at rest.'[1] The central theme is, therefore, the soaring of the finite soul to and its complete consummation in the Absolute consciousness. Naturally, then comes the story of descent of the soul and its relation to the Absolute and the formation of its organs and faculties from the Prakṛti. A state of evolution follows. And when the story of the descent has been told, the story of the ascent begins, and its method is indicated. To the mystic the story of the ascent is no less important than the story of the descent, for he is anxious to regain the lost dominion; and the story of the descent is given a patient hearing, because its knowledge is expected to throw light on the ascent. But the mystic is more anxious for the ascent, for in the process he can personally see and feel the move of life and consciousness in inward play and indrawn activity which directly reveals to him the truth of every stage of emergence in evolution and its withdrawal in involution. And at every higher stage of ascent, he feels greater ease, more life and more refined delight. The more he advances, the more he is struck by the ease and felicity of the expansive life, and the more he is attracted

[1] *Vide* chap. ii., p. 72.

towards getting to the source and transcending the divided consciousness and life.

We propose to discuss the teachings of the Gītā under the following heads:—

(1) the philosophic tendencies;
(2) the descent of the soul;
(3) the ascent of the soul; and
(4) the spiritual fulfilment.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES AND THE MYSTIC IDEAL

The Gītā and the Upaniṣads—The Mystic Ideal—Intellect and Intuition—Transcendence and Immanence—Akṣara and Puruṣottama—The Finite Soul—The Active Life—The Law of Harmony—The Meaning of Destruction—Poetry, Philosophy and Mysticism—Predestination and Human Freedom—' The Dew drop slips into the Sea '—Cos mic Consciousness—Viśvarupa (the Cosmic Picture)—A Comparison—Māyā and the World of Change—Cosmology and Psychology of the Gītā.

THE Gītā AND THE Upaniṣads

THE Gītā has not taught and conceived philosophical theories substantially different from those of the Upaniṣads. We meet almost verbatim quotation after quotation, from the Upaniṣads. The fundamental concepts they deal with are identical. The teachings do not fundamentally differ, though their applications are different. The originality of the Gītā lies in showing that even fixed in transcendence the adept can regulate the forces of life and mould

them according to cosmic ends. It seems to have been inspired by the actualities of life seen in the light of a transcendental philosophy, and it shows how the soaring in transcendence does not suffer even in shaping and guiding the forces of life. On the other hand, it thinks that the soul fixed in transcendence is by its expansive vision spiritually more fit to mould the forces and guide them to cosmic ends. The less illuminated souls are restricted in their activity by the narrow and limited vision and cannot shape the creative, conservative and destructive forces to cosmic ends. The illuminated souls do not suffer from limitations of insight and scruples of conscience. Their adaptation, then, is according to their cosmic vision and extensive light. The Gītā is the gospel of knowledge applied to activity. The Upaniṣads are the gospel of knowledge confined to itself.

In venturing this opinion we, no doubt, dissent from the tradition about the identity of teachings of the Upaniṣads and the Gītā; but we cannot help it in view of the clear indication of the bearing of knowledge on our adaptation in the Gītā. Philosophy in high abstraction may ignore the practical limitations of life, but so long as the concrete life has to be lived, philosophy cannot

ignore the complex issues of practical adaptation and must throw some light upon them to help us on. Life is vision as well as move. The illuminated vision makes the move easier and more graceful. The mystic, accordingly, is supremely quiet in his highest activity. And this is naturally so. The mystic has a double personality, the man in him is intensely active, the divine in him is supremely quiet; the spirit is quiet in its fullness, the man is bound to be active because of the rejuvenated energy which the mystic initiation is successful in letting loose.

This double personality is the natural conclusion of mystic fruition; for mysticism is nothing, if it does not rear up a finer and a subtler self. This finer self is not the astral self or the etheric double. It is born of the transcendent impress upon the finer shades of being and continues so long as the personality has a hold. The hypothesis of such a self is a natural conclusion, for the finer perceptions and realizations must be retained somewhere. Any course of practical training, be it in high philosophy or spirituality, soon fosters such a finer personality and this holds on till the seer passes into the final calm. Only on such a hypothesis of double personality can we

explain the height of wisdom, the intensity of action and the subtlety of perception of the seers. Their perceptions are quick, feelings subtle and knowledge immediate. They rear up and continue to live in the second self which can send quick responses to the finer and subtler spiritual tendencies before they can pass into the quiet.

Such a personality requires to be shuffled off before the complete passing into transcendence, and the Upaniṣads in laying emphasis upon the transcendence have to overlook, if not entirely to ignore, the move of life in its finest and most expansive form in a stage just preceding the stage of final consummation. The 'shining' in divine glory has been shadowed by the predominant note of transcendence in the Upaniṣads.

But in the Gītā the life shining in divine glory has been made more explicit and the active stirring of the ideal man, made more prominent than the sublime quiet so natural to transcendent consciousness. Not that the Gītā does not see the dignity of the sublime quiet, but that the Gītā is anxious to present the necessity and dignity of active stirring in sublime quiet. The Gītā is anxious to be 'true to the kindred points of heaven and home'.

THE MYSTIC IDEAL

No serious mysticism has denied the complete overshadowing of personality in the final illumination. But different conceptions have been held with regard to the final illumination, and this difference is mainly due to pre-conceived intellectual notions. Some conceive that the personality gets back to the source and is momentarily overshadowed. Some, again, go to the length of denying it outright. Be it complete denial or temporary overshadowing, it cannot be doubted that mysticism is essentially a move to the fullness of life, consciousness and being, rising as it does from the tendency inherent in the soul to overcome limitation and division.

This tendency to set aside the stirring of a divided consciousness and the promise to the fullness of life and light are what make mysticism attractive. The mystic must appear with this promise. He excels others and commands a hearing and a following by his direct experience and enjoyment of such a life and by a sure promise of the practicable realization of such a life. Sanat Kumar, the seer of the Chhandogya, puts the mystic ideal in a pithy sentence ' The expanse is the delight'.

Life moves in limitation but it has a tendency of transcending this limitation. This tendency is inherent in life and nothing infuses more spirit into it than the occasional freedom from the concrete details of existence in the silence and delight of the expanse. The quiet soul can read this clear indication and tendency of life.

The mystic is a seeker of the vastness which is its final stay and original source.[1] It does not know when its nativity begins, but it feels that it cannot have rest and peace until and unless it has come back to the source. The intensive attraction and anxious clinging to the expanse indicate its true and essential nature and clearly prove its confinement in the concrete form as only a temporary, though a distressing, phase of its history and existence.

There should be then no two opinions about the expansive life as the mystic ideal : even those who insist upon a distinction and not a difference between the infinite and the finite have not denied this expanse of life and delight as the mystic ideal. They reserve the possibility for the finite, while retaining the finitude, of enjoying the vast and the expansive.

[1] *Vide* chap. v. 21–24.

The Gītā recounts two forms of spiritual ideal; the concrete spiritual life in the divine and the abstract spiritual life in transcendence. To the mystic this difference is of little value, for he is anxious to catch the ray of spiritual life and is not troubled over the forms of spiritual realization. The mystic is the man of faith and vision, and he gives himself up to the genial influence of spirit and is consoled therein. The mystic is more a practical idealist and is more anxious for the adaptation of life that cannot disturb his spiritual illumination. He enjoys life in its partial and complete expression in spirit. It will be more correct to say that he lives the spirit in its restricted expression and unbounded expanse.

Life is essentially spirit. The more mystic the vein of mind, the more the move in rhythm and unison with the dance of spirit within. The Gītā does not inculcate a sudden step into transcendence; it seeks, on the other hand, to move on with the dance of life and to rise from the concrete vision of spiritual life to its pure transcendence.[1]

The Gītā seems to be anxious about this concrete spiritual hold for the regulation of life in accordance with the spiritual light.

[1] *Vide* vi. 30.

It urges the seeker not to mind so much the theoretical discussion of the transcendent and the immanent spiritual life as to be sincerely spiritual. It is anxious to establish the divine life in man and to work out its possibility.

The spiritual life has then two stages: (1) the stage of the concrete life, and (2) the stage of transcendence. The concrete represents the divine life in its dynamic aspect. It has again two stages: (1) the stage of concentration, and (2) the stage of diffusion.

The transcendent or the Absolute beggars all description. It denies all conception. The concrete life is an all-embracing unity. In comparison with the first it suffers a limitation. It is here that centralization and radiation of spirit take place. It is all-inclusive Divinity of Power, Excellence and Holiness. Concentration is centralization, diffusion is radiation. We cannot separate the two so long as the spiritual life is dynamic. It concentrates itself to be radiative. Apparently concentration seems to be opposed to diffusion; in reality, the two go together. This is true of the infinite and the finite. The finite is not widely radiative, the infinite is. Except this diffusive influence of radiation there is nothing to distinguish between the infinite and the finite,

for, as spirit, they are identical in being; and so long as this identity is not fully felt, the concrete spiritual life has an urge towards the assimilation of more life and power to be effectively radiative. And for this the spiritual life requires to be centralized.

Centralization tears off the limitation, diffusion opens the floodgate of divine delight and force; and the soul moves on with cosmic force and strength. The concentrated spiritual life may cross all distinctions and limitations. But concentration may be so deep and effective that it may cross the possibilities of wide diffusion and illimitable radiation and pass into the quiet of the indeterminate. It transcends the native tendencies of centralization and radiation.

Even in the life of concentration there can be no standing difference between the finite and the infinite, and under elevating spiritual influence the finite has its occasional heightening of consciousness, when it feels almost divine influence and power. Elasticity is the possession of spirit, and when the soul is under mystic influence, it has the sense of distinction overpowered by the sense of a wider being and subtler influence. It would be a rash generalization to hold from this that a com-

plete identity is possible between the finite and the infinite in the life of concentration, but there can be no gainsaying that the finite feels an expanse of being and influence.

The spiritual indeterminate is, no doubt, the highest stage in spiritual realization, and though the Gītā does not ignore this spiritual indeterminate behind the concrete hold in spiritual life, still[1] it is fully awake to the life of centralization and radiation. This centralization and radiation can be true only of spirit in the life of expression. The transcendence exhibits the spirit in its indeterminate being.

The concrete functioning of the divine life cannot be lost upon us, if we closely follow the teachings. The Gītā emphasizes the move in the concrete divine life as well as the quiet in transcendence. The softer virtues of love and devotion have been duly recognized, and they are meaningless if the Gītā insists only upon the transcendence in divine life, for there they can have no play.

The soul, in attaining transcendence, passes through the stages set out above if it proceeds in the way the Gītā suggests. Devotion does not

[1] *Vide* chap. viii. 21.

necessarily imply a duality, though it does imply movement; love throws into the background the difference, and it becomes possible, when the identity of nature and essence is established. And the greatest truth is that the divine and the human have never been different, the difference being a shadow.

To begin with, life feels a limitation and sees its truth; but as it advances in spirituality, the limitation melts away. And true spirituality begins when these distinctions are superseded, and we come to feel the stirring in us to be the divine stirring. The spiritual life has, then, a transcendence and a concentration, and when the limitation breaks off, the Divine Presence is felt in each centre in complete integrity and in fullness of being.

When we say that distinction disappears between the finite and the infinite, we mean the dissolution of a false individuality naturally clinging to the self from eternity; and with the disappearance of this individuality, the finite self comes to feel the vastness and magnitude of the infinite and itself as a spark of and in intimacy with the Divine self.[1] We call it a spark, but at the

[1] *Vide* Madhusudan's *Commentary* on chapter vii. 5.

same time, such description, we feel, is inadequate; the spirit stands above all analogy, and though we can distinguish the limited and radiative influence of spirit, still this difference in functioning, should not induce us to read a distinction and difference in being. Spirit defies such distinction, and, therefore, in speaking of the finitude and personality of spirit we really lose its significance.

It is a spark, and, as such the full Divine self can have its expression through the spark of light, as there is nothing to hinder such expression. The elasticity of spiritual life lies in this that on occasions the inner being is quickened and heightened to feel the identity of being with the infinite. The lapses are due to the imperfection and limitation of faculties. The self in man is intimately at one with the Divine, and, in so far as the dynamic aspect of spiritual life is concerned, it has moments of exaltation and heightening of radiation as well as moments of falling off and depression. Such ebb and flow are a necessity and a law in the life of spiritual expression which cannot have always an even continuity. Spiritual life in expression, to keep up its richness, must be ever becoming, ever creative and ever changing.

The adept is conscious of his identity with the transcendent, but he is not still freed from the vision of the divine life and has to fully adapt himself to the play of the divine forces. The adept is fixed in trânscendence, though he moves on with the elasticity and swiftness of divine life for cosmic ends. And as such, the Gītā has to accentuate the active life in the mystic side by side with the quiet of transcendence. The mystic feels that no difference exists between the Divine and the human in essence, though a difference in radiation is possible and actually exists. With this knowledge the limitation vanishes, and the active life becomes more extensively radiative than it would have been, if limiting ignorance had still persisted. When the Gītā, therefore, retains active and devotional stirrings in the concrete spiritual life, they must be understood as the embrace of the self by the self, the stirring turning upon itself.

The mystic ideal of the Gītā then is the realization of the Divine in its immanence and transcendence, the Divine in man and nature, and the Divine beyond and above them.

The being of the adept is so tuned that it can receive and enjoy the expansive life through all the sources, all along remaining quiet in

transcendence, making such reception more easy, delight more secure and activity more effective and embracing. The ties that cling to the self are torn asunder, and the inlets of reception and outlets of response have no restriction and become wide open. The adept receives to give. The more he gives, the more he receives. And all the time he feels the identity of being in transcendence.

INTELLECT AND INTUITION

If spiritual life does not mean the complete quiet and silence, it has a phase in the concrete hold of life; and even in that phase nothing but spirit is supreme, nothing but spirit reigns. And the first stirring of the concrete spiritual life is this knowing of self as self in its own embrace. In this stir of turning upon itself, the spirit is not divided, though it appears as concrete. Intellectually a distinction is read in this turning round upon self, but such a categorical understanding gives a false reading to the actual reality. It only attempts at the best logical description, but it cannot fully understand the move of spiritual life. The terms 'distinction', 'difference' or 'distinction without difference' indicate a meaning which is not actually conveyed in spiritual intuition. Spiritual life does not allow a

distinction or a difference, for it is one life. And to the eye of the mystic the problem of the one and the many does not seriously arise, for the mystic is conscious more than the philosopher that the spirit denies such categorically 'clear' thinking and evades logical approach, however fine it may be. So long as the intellect is active, it cannot be satisfied, unless it has thought in categorical terms about the spiritual intuition; but the intellect moves in set categories and cannot fully apprehend the elasticity and mobility of spirit. It sometimes appears as one, sometimes as many; really such a description of the spirit falls short of truth, for in intuition spirit appears to be the only reality; the counting of it as the one or the many does not strike us then. The problem of the one and the many is a problem for the objective intellect, the relational consciousness; it is strictly no problem when the limitations of relational consciousness are overcome. The rational synthesis, therefore, differs from the mystic intuition, but so strong seems to be the effect of habitual adaptation that reason does not see its limitation even after the force of life and intuition has crossed its influence. And so long as the adept is not securely established in mystic life, he feels the dominating influence of relational

consciousness at every step of life and will not feel the law, the ease and the subtlety of mystic life. This limitation of thinking in terms of analytic reason is responsible for describing the mystic life, sometimes in terms of love, sometimes in terms of knowledge, sometimes in terms of activity. So fine is the mystic urge that it is hard to feel its influence and understand it completely.

The attempt at understanding the mystic life and intuition in terms of our faculties falls short of correct description.

The concentration of consciousness in the concrete should not countenance the description of such a life in terms of our logic. The difference exists, no doubt, between the abstract intuition and the concrete intuition, but such difference becomes magnified when the intellectual notions are introduced into it. Such rigid distinctions are not possible in spiritual life which appears as concrete when it is truly abstract. But how the abstract passes into the concrete is beyond human intellect to understand, far less to appreciate. It is beyond the capacity of intellect to know it, for intellect grows in the course of evolution, and however fine it may be, it cannot understand the move of life from the transcendent to the immanent. Nothing can

witness it, except spirit. Spirit can only reveal it. The spiritually fit can break the spell of the divided life and cross the flow of becoming, but he too finds it difficult to explain the move of the abstract into the concrete. The problem remains a wonder for the intellect. The spirit is moving when it is thought to be static; it is distant, when it is supposed to be near; it is actually near when it is supposed to be distant.[1] Such conflicts and antinomies trouble us when we attempt to think of and define the spirit. Any description, concrete or abstract, falls short of it though in spiritual life there is quiet in transcendence and stirring in immanence. And like the oneness of life in transcendence, the concrete life also is unitive life; difference has no place therein, though there is the apparent indication of distinction.

TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE

The absolute life is one life, be it in immanence or in transcendence. 'It supports all things, it is without qualities, though it appears as enjoying them.' 'It exists, covering every form of existence in it.' 'The finite selves are puruṣas.'[2] They exist from eternity.[3]

[1] *Vide* chap. xiii, 15. [2] *Vide* chap. xiii, 13, 14, 19.
[3] *Vide* chap. xv, 7.

These quotations hold up before us the conception of the Absolute, the infinite and the finite selves. The infinite is immanent in finite selves and nature. This immanence is strictly relative to finite selves and nature. This relation introduces some change in the conception of Being which now appears as an immanent unity. This embraces all and enlightens all. It has no limitation, for nothing exists beyond it. Still it is not the exclusion or the denial of the many.

This move of unitive consciousness is followed by another move of consciousness in the formation of finite souls; here again, the move is one of reproducing and forming concrete centres in the infinite life; this move is in the urge of expression, and expression can have no meaning unless it is preceded by concentration. Expression is a move towards the concrete, be it in the Absolute or in the infinite. And naturally, in the urge of expression, the spiritual life is moving on to the concrete, though even in this move it does not lose its integrity and oneness.

To the mystic reader of the Gītā, the spirit has therefore three forms :—

(1) the homogeneity of the Absolute;
(2) the concreteness of the infinite; and
(3) the concentration in the finite.

But in these distinctions the integrity of the spirit is not lost, though in the writings of the commentators, equal reality has not been extended to the three. And here arises the point of divergence between the transcendentalist and the theists.

The niceties of philosophy do not disturb the mystic, for his conviction actually rests upon deep revelations and he realizes simultaneously the conscious life in limitation, the conscious life in radiating expanse, the conscious life beyond the terms of description, beyond relations.

'The limitation is only seeming, the undivided appears to be divided.'[1] This seemingness troubles us and the realistic consciousness clings to the seeming division as real. The mystic consciousness breaks off the limitation of the realistic consciousness and does not see limitation in spirit. The mystic feels that the consciousness, which enlightens the inner workings of the man, is also the consciousness which illumines the sun and the stars. The mystic sees the oneness of life in immanence and in transcendence and feels that the greater is the move towards the centre, the more is the sense of division dispelled.

[1] *Vide* chap. xiii, 16.

The difference in mystic illumination accentuates the difference between the unitive and identity consciousness of the Absolute. Mysticism in its start and initiation widens and deepens the unitive consciousness, which seems to be the highest truth, for the vision extends unto and embraces the whole existence and is apparently a beatitude which the soul clings to. The beauties and glories of such an existence are too much for the searching soul, which does not soar beyond. The rest of the soul in this concentrated divine life stops its pursuit, and naturally, it becomes satisfied with the vision of a unitive being which is being and at the same time becoming. He, whose vision is extended unto this, naturally thinks of the unity of the divine life and feels the identity of the divine life in man and God. Man and God are terms indicating the concentration but not the reality; the reality is the same.

Even here teachers disagree. Some think concentration is real; others hold that concentration is seeming. This divides the commentators of the Gītā into different camps with their fine accuracies of logic, but the divine inspiration seems to have laid equal stress on the two aspects of the divine life, the all-inclusive unitive consciousness and the transcendence beyond.

Behind the play of forces in spiritual expression, the mystic feels the *terra incognita* in spiritual life. This may be called the 'silence' of the mystic life. But this silence is not the precursor of the mystic illumination nor the Christian prayer of the quiet, nor the calm satisfaction of ecstacy and spiritual marriage. These attitudes of consciousness are consistent with unitive consciousness where the spirit moves in itself, the introversion of mystic consciousness. Such attitudes indicate the dynamic urge in the self. They are the oscillations of the spiritual life in the concrete and are consistent with the unitive life of the divine.

The falling-off of the divided consciousness or the self-loss in the 'ocean pacific' of God, as Underhill has fitly described it, is still a plunge and immersion in the unitive consciousness and is followed by a deeper awakening. Consciousness loses the sense of distinction and the inferiority of the finite self and understands it to be divine in nature. But still the impress of the human type continues and causes occasional lapses from the height of the newly attained spirituality.

The falling-off of the divided consciousness in the unitive consciousness is to be distinguished

from the complete lapse of the personal consciousness in the Absolute, for the Absolute transcends distinction. It is impersonal and does not allow a difference between the finite and the infinite. In fact, the texts are not positive about it, though the commentators have had their own says. The full implications of the Gītā become clear, if the spiritual principle be unitive in immanence and identity in transcendence. The Gītā accepts both the homogeneous and the unitive nature of the Absolute, that is, it does not commit itself to either a static or a dynamic character of the spirit. The spirit denies both the descriptions ; it combines both, though it transcends both. This ideal has a close resemblance to the mystic ideal set forth by Plotinus. Plotinus acknowledges a trinity in unity of Nous, Noësis, and Noëta in which the whole nature of the Absolute is manifested, and yet he affirms 'a super-essential indetermination in an absolute unity behind them'.

What exactly is the nature of mystic illumination in this stage is hard to tell, but the mystic urge gives the deep conviction that the spirit is unitive and beyond the comprehension of the ordinary intellectual categories. And the mystic spirit widens and widens the

vision, till it passes into silence. This silence is the silence of transcendence incapable of being understood in terms of concrete life and consciousness. Such a transcendent silence, beyond the silence of calm satisfaction of ecstasy and spiritual marriage, is the end of the mystic quest, and the Gītā is quite alive to it.

Aksara and Purusottama

Three terms occur in the Gītā which deserve special notice. These terms are Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama. Commentators differ about their meaning. Śaṁkara and the Śaṁkarites take Kṣara to mean the evolutionary product, Akṣara to mean the principle of becoming and Puruṣottama to mean the Absolute. Venkata Nātha in his Brahmānanda Giri interprets Kūtastha as the dynamic force, the causal energy. Puruṣottama is the Absolute. He is Paramātmā. Venkata Nātha defines Paramātman as the Being-in-itself. The unchangeable Absolute embraces the whole world by his śakti, called Māyā. Rāmānuja has taken Kṣara and Akṣara to mean respectively the unemancipated and emancipated souls and Puruṣottama to mean the Infinite. The Mādhvites take Kṣara to mean finite souls, Akṣara, Lakṣmi

the expressive and the creative energy[1] and Puruṣottama the Infinite. Viśvanāth Chakravartti takes Akṣara to mean Brahman, the undifferentiated consciousness, Kṣara to mean the finite differentiated consciousness and Puruṣottama to mean the concrete Absolute which synthesizes the undifferentiated consciousness as well as the differentiated consciousness. Akṣara is the bare potentiality of being, Puruṣottama the fully expressed synthetic unity of the Absolute. This synthetic unity embraces the undifferentiated Absolute, the Absolute in relation to the creative energy and the Absolute in relation to the transcendent spiritual expressions. Puruṣottama is the complete concept of the Absolute, and Akṣara, the incomplete concept.

These differences in the interpretations of the terms arise from the different philosophic conceptions which the teachers hold. It is very difficult to judge how far any one fits in with the reading of Gītā. The emphasis laid upon one or another aspect of the Absolute is due to the limitations of philosophic thinking. Whatever the differences may be in the terms of logic, there can be no doubt that a dynamic and a transcendent principle

[1] *Vide* Damodar's Edition of the Gītā, pp. 82, 85.

is necessary to fit in with the world system and our experience. None can deny it, though every one is free to explain the terms in his own way. Whether the spiritual life is a dynamic fullness or a bare abstraction of being, there is no doubt that in spiritual life there is a dynamic expression as well as a static calmness. The commentators have emphasized the one or the other aspect of the spiritual intuition and have not recognized the equal importance of both of them. Spiritual life soars beyond the concrete. It has a start in the concrete, though it has a rest in the transcendence. The Gītā has insisted on both aspects of the spiritual life, though, occasionally, it sems to have emphasized the one or the other. Akṣara is the Infinite on the point of concrete expression. Puruṣottama is the Absolute in transcendence.

The concrete spiritual life has equal play with spiritual transcendence. Visvanāth Chakravartti's reading of Akṣara and Puruṣottama should be a bit changed. The Vaiṣṇava teachers seem to have been attracted by the felicitations of the concrete spiritual life and have, therefore, emphasized the dynamic fullness of the spiritual life. There are spiritual experiences too deep for words. They speak for subtle and fine vibrations of

spiritual life. Spiritual life has a phase of glorious and shining experiences as all mystics are witness to it, but to characterize the transcendence in spiritual life as the initial stage of such experience is a reversion of spiritual order. Transcendence is presupposed in the concrete spiritual life, and so it cannot be conceived as the precursor of concrete realizations; rather, the subtler vibrations of spiritual life must subside before we can realize spiritual transcendence. In spiritual ascent the order is from the concrete to the abstract and not from the abstract to the concrete. To emphasize the concrete spiritual realizations is one thing; to invert the order of the concrete and the abstract in spiritual experience and realization is a totally different thing. For the concrete necessarily comes in the order of expression and the abstract is the Absolute Being. The realization of the abstract is necessarily deeper than the realization of the concrete, nay it is also unique. The concrete spiritual life is a fine being, heightened activity and expansive vision. It works up the finer currents in the soul, the subtler joys of life, the newer oscillations of the spirit; but it suffers from the restriction of expression. It has the joy of life; but it lacks the joy of the calm. In

this sense, the spiritual transcendence offers an experience which nothing else can offer, not even the finest vibration of the dynamic life. The abstract is never experienced, though it is presupposed in the concrete spiritual life. As such, the spiritual life in its transcendent uniqueness can be felt when we cross the concrete consciousness.

In the spiritual ascent when the soul crosses the forces of instinct, it naturally comes to realize the deeper powers of the soul which seem to overcome it. The rest and the quiet which the soul experiences and the deep flow of blessedness which it has now the privilege to enjoy are almost too much for it, and the searching soul has a sleep of blessedness and delight. This quiet is mistaken by Viśvanāth Chakravartti for the experience of the spiritual indeterminate. As already pointed out, the sleep in ecstasy is a state in unitive consciousness and should not be confounded with the spiritual indeterminate. The spiritual ecstasy and the sleeping of powers are still states in concrete consciousness and cannot be compared to the spiritual indeterminate. In the abstract consciousness the seeming difference of the dynamic spiritual life has no place and the soul realizes the identity of the spirit. Such realization

transcends the rise and fall of the dynamic consciousness. The sameness of spiritual realization, which the Vaiṣṇavas accept, is a temporary fall in dynamic expression, though this fall may be due to the turning of the spirit upon itself. This fall in the dynamic expression of being should not be confounded with absolute intuition.

THE FINITE SOUL

The logical discussion about the nature of the soul is immaterial, so long as the mystic knows it to be essentially spirit. Whether the finite soul is real, metaphysically or psychologically, does not disturb the mystic, for the characterization of the soul in either way cannot instal or dismiss it. It is there, and the mystic feels its being most potently.

The mystic feels its power of illumination and can bear direct evidence to its expansive being which it occasionally feels. To limit the power of the soul and to fix its magnitude are beyond mystic psychology, for the mystic knows, more than others, the capability of expansion which resides in the soul. The Gītā seems to have indicated the limitations of the natural ego as well as the expansiveness of the spiritual ego, and the latter looks small because of the reflection of the former upon it. There are some passages in the Gītā

which speak of the human soul as distinct from the divine. There are other passages which indicate the identity of spirit in the human and the divine. The contradictions of the passages disappear when we think of the dynamic concreteness and the abstract sameness of spiritual life. The dynamic concreteness accepts modes of spirit, and so long as the concrete vision lasts the soul appears as functioning individually.[1]

So long as the intelligence operates through animal organism, the soul labours under the limitations of the agent and becomes bound to natural inclinations. Pleasure and pain, exaltation and depression of spirit are natural consequences. The spirit of agency is displaced by the spirit of calmness when the soul is fixed in its spiritual height. Birth in spirituality is indicated by the delight of expanse. So long as the concrete life in spirit continues, the self enjoys the expansive being in a dynamic spiritual life. It feels the all-round expansive being of its own. The logical consciousness still continues and still proceeds to characterize the soul as atomic. The concrete life should, no doubt, be expressive

[1] *Vide* chapter xv. 7 and Svami's commentary thereupon. *Vide* chapter viii. 21.

and stimulative from a centre, though it feels in moments of occasional expansiveness the centre displaced from its finite hold. Such displacement is rare but not impossible. But even in the concrete life spirit seems to receive the inrush of the deeper being, so much so that it moves with swift speed and ready decision; and at times the truth flashes that the spirit that moves within is the same spirit that moves the cosmic pulse.

The infusion of the mystic spirit in the soul has the immediate effect of establishing a connection with the fountain head of life and consciousness, and the soul has no longer the confined vision and individuality.

The desires are the clingings of the divided life and natural self, and so long as they stick fast to it, the soul cannot feel its higher and expansive nature. But when the desires are calmed, the self rests in itself.[1]

The mystic lives the infinite and the finite life. This uncommon privilege is his. The commentators do not differ about this. They differ about the continuity of the finite personality in the final consummation.

[1] *Vide* chapter ii. 55.

The mystic, according to the Gītā, has the final consummation in absorption and realization of identity. He crosses the limits of finitude and realizes the expanse of the infinite and finally passes into the quiet of transcendence.

THE ACTIVE LIFE

The Gītā is anxious to free the soul from its natural limitations and to carry it on to the realization of its inmost essence through its fuller dynamic being. When the soul becomes fixed in the transparence of its own being, it becomes an associate to the accomplishment of the divine purpose running through the universe, though in this task it feels neither exalted nor depressed at results. Activity is a natural consequence of heightened energy and increased vitality, because of the spiritual regeneration. Rejuvenation is the promise and the common experience of the mystic life, and when the soul has reached the highest point in the ascent, and as long as it retains the thread of concrete life, it feels the freedom and ease of movement, and instead of denying activity it becomes a concrete centre of ceaseless activity; but it never loses the equilibrium of its deeper being. The concrete spiritual life is a life of

intense activity. Amidst conflicting circumstances and diverging forces the adept never loses calmness. He has been able to cross the unstable equilibrium of a divided life and does not lose the balance of his being. The star of his soul shines perpetually and the light leads him on unerringly. The mystic is the master of adaptations and is free from the scruples of an unilluminated conscience. He possesses a neutral equilibrium.

The beauty of the life of a mystic is this that it combines the greatest activity with the least disquiet of the soul. Dynamic instability and neutral equilibrium combine in him. He is the centre in which the greatest activity combines with unruffled calmness.

The Master has not inculcated the philosophy of inaction so natural to the spiritually fit who looks upon the cosmic stirrings as inevitable to a course of becoming. On the other hand, he is anxious to see the spiritually fit mould and regulate the unceasing flow of becoming and direct it to its higher and brighter phases. The ethical end, therefore, has a deeper meaning in the Gītā, and the immanence of the divine life has an intensive import.

This effort at higher ends has, therefore, to meet checks and overcome them. The immanent life

has always this necessity and end, and life's urge towards the good implies the necessary limitation of the evil—the dark and blind powers—and the constant effort to overcome and surmount them.

The urge of creation is a limitation. The urge of expansion breaks the limitation. The mystic, more than any other, feels the actuality of these two concrete urges, the urge of self-concentration and the urge of self-expansion, crossing each other. But the mystic is anxious to find a way out of this conflict.

The mystic reaches a height in consciousness whence he can realize the possibility of free move and activity which are not opposed to expansive being. The move is spontaneous and free from personal motive. The mystic does not stop the dynamic urge, but stands above it. His being becomes responsive to the oscillations of life and he can give expression to the subtle beauties and sublimities of the divine life.

The mystic, more than anybody else, realizes how the constant growth of life and beauty is proceeding from the bosom of Divinity and how the Absolute Being remains in his transcendence and integrity unaffected and undisturbed by the continuous flow of the becoming. The divine

fecundity is not exhausted in the flow of becoming.

The Gītā realizes that the constant urge to creativeness is associated with an urge for establishing order and harmony. Love and harmony play an important part. Love initiates expression, harmony keeps it flowing. Under concrete conditions, when the harmony of life is disturbed, it at once tends to be re-established. The spiritual life cannot tolerate discord and ugliness and is constantly at work for establishing beauty and harmony. Beauty is the soul of creation, for spiritual life is essentially order and harmony and when in the creative order the balance and the harmony are disturbed spiritual force at once becomes operative to re-adjust and re-settle them.

The outpouring of life and activity from the transcendent height is directed to the creation and preservation of the spiritual forces, adapted to the setting up of the harmony and beauty of a spiritual order. The mystic is active to this end. The mystic is a creator in the sense that he understands the meaning of the divine urge in creation and is anxious to preserve the beautiful and the holy. The joy of the mystic in active life is the joy of the creation of values and adjustment of the forces to that end. The mystic understands

the value of harmony as the key to the inflow of the divine life in the cosmic and social order and is anxious to keep up the harmony of forces inward and outward. Harmony is the soul of the mystic life, and the mystic perceives that the more he ascends the steps of the ladder, the greater is the harmony. The forces of discord are therefore to be destroyed. They disturb the inrush of the secret energy and the divine life, and hence the mystic quickly, but spontaneously, moves to set the forces in equilibrium. The least incongruity disturbs the sensitive soul of the mystic and he invariably seeks to set it right.

The concrete spiritual life is, therefore, constantly active. Whatever the spiritual life may be in its transcendence, the spiritual life in immanence is busy in organizing forces that may keep up the spiritual activity in unceasing continuity.

When the spiritual life has an expansion it has an uncommon flow of energy at its command. It becomes more swiftly and more widely active, but it is no longer impelled by basic passions. It is moved by the demand for establishing a spiritual order and a spiritual fellowship.

But this move is spontaneous, for the mystic has no desire, though he has activity. Actions

prompted by desires are deliberate. Actions on inspiration are spontaneous. The mystic assimilates in him the divine nature and is moved on by the spontaneity of the creative urge and is, therefore, not affected by its result. The natural self moves in the world of determinism; the mystic self enjoys freedom.

The mystic has no personal will but has tremendous activity. His whole being is moved by the cosmic will, and as such he is neither the doer nor the agent.

The freedom from individuality is the great asset of the mystic, and it is difficult to foresee the course of his action. The limitations of popular ethics have no restraint for him, the inducements of definite motives have no charm for him. The mystic has a novel adaptation because he has a new vision.

The mystic does not incur any responsibility or obligation. Responsibility is associated with personal consciousness, and as the mystic has lost it, he works, but he neither acquires merit nor suffers demerit.

The mystic overcomes the tyranny of morality. He no longer suffers from the scruples of the limited vision. This does not mean that the moral code has no meaning or value. Since the

mystic life is the consummation of life and consciousness, it is guided by the divine urge which no moral code can determine or regulate. The mystic has not the rigidity of a moralist, who accepts the social forces as given and checks or regulates them according to the limited vision. The moralist is troubled by a duality of ethical concepts, right and wrong. The moral man is allured by his particular gospel and forgets that his end is knowledge. He begins to see an end in morality itself, and as such he is troubled by an *a priori* division of the impulses and emotions as good and bad, moral and immoral. Morality touches the fringe of life, but cannot dive into its depth. The mystic has got over the ethical duality and feels the unity of life and is not troubled by the scruples of a dualistic ethical consciousness. To the mystic there is nothing, high or low. The spirit ray is seen everywhere, though not in equal magnitude and expression. The ugly is not ugly to the mystic, the dead not dead, the vicious not vicious. The dance of life is felt everywhere the same; even in ugliness, he sees beauty; in vice, the promise of high spirituality. The mystic sees the fountain, the clear waters of life which are not contaminated in any way, for the spark of life everywhere is the same, and

he is, therefore, ever hopeful about the final destiny of man. The mystic with his wide knowledge is, therefore, specially fit to guide the destinies of humanity.

The new knowledge in spirituality sets his activities in ways and directions unintelligible to the mean intelligence. The mystic has a morality of his own, based upon the real data of a superior knowledge. In view of this knowledge, contradictions of life disappear and adaptations become easy and spontaneous.

Without the mystic vision none can understand the mystic move, and hence the mystic appears a dilemma, his actions, often a set of moral contradictions.

When the forces that disturb the harmony of life and society operate, naturally the mystic becomes anxious to set the forces right by transforming them or by drawing out a finer nature out of them. But when the forces are too adverse to be thus transformed, the mystic feels the necessity of quelling the lower forces and meeting them by natural means.

The mystic feels the dark forces in society, just as he feels the clogs in his soul; both of which are obstacles to the expression of divine life and purpose. He is, therefore, anxious to

establish social forces in order and harmony; for, he understands the need of the higher spiritual values in human society and is anxious to realize them. The mystic is the man of eternal hope, and he is anxious to herald the advent of a spiritual order and unceasingly works to that end.

The mystic, often unnoticed, keeps the sweet and silent forces at work and strives hard to string social life and social forces at a high spirituality. The mystic influences the social consciousness and inspires it to the realization of higher values, both creative and conservative. Spiritual values evolve with finer currents of the soul, and what seems an impossible ideal to less developed souls is evidently actual with the fervent soul of the mystics. Social life often runs at a low ebb; the mystic infuses new creative forces in it. Generally, human society has short visions and gross impulses. The mystic widens the conception of social life and puts it upon a broad basis and guides it to finer and more delightful harmonies. In this way the mystic keeps afresh the social life and prevents its degradation.

The mystic understands limitations of the finite consciousness which appears as a speck in the

ocean of being; and so long as he is active in his finite being he draws inspiration from the transcendent and regulates life's move with a new vision inaccessible to the realistic consciousness.

Strictly speaking, the mystic does nothing, even when he is seen to move; he is fixed in transcendence and his being is not controlled by the limited laws of life. The fixity in transcendence and the quickening of life by the touch of this transcendence make the mystic life appear a contradiction. The mystic is hard to be understood as he moves in transcendence for himself, while others see him move in his concrete self with manifest objectives and with close attention to realize them.

The mystic has fine creative instinct. He creates, but he is not attached to his creation, for his is the spontaneous creation of spirit. Non-attachment to the fine display of spirit in the relative order allows the mystic the reservation of fine energy and subtle powers. Non-attachment allows him an isolation and an even flow of creative energy.

The Law of Harmony

The mystic consciousness moves by the law of harmony. The mystic is more than anybody else

awakened by the law of harmony which keeps up the cosmic frame. There is a harmony in the depth of our being and in the centre of the cosmic life. The mystic directly sees and feels it and puts it to service in his earthly adaptation.

Harmony is the law of life. It is felt in the equilibrium of nature's forces in man. But there is a difference between the harmony that we enjoy in our natural life and the harmony that we enjoy in spiritual life. Nature's forces are brought to an equilibrium, and when the equilibrium is disturbed, the forces become distractive. Moreover, the normal equilibrium has a tendency to be put out of balance by extraneous circumstances. But the harmony that is established in spiritual life is the creation of active spirit. It is not disturbed in the least and keeps perfect equilibrium under conflicting forces of nature. This is an indication of the superiority of spiritual harmony to the normal equilibrium. But the spiritual harmony is to be established in its own way. It has, therefore, to re-adjust and transform nature's forces so that it can safely establish the order of spirit in nature. If spiritual life in the concrete requires a preparation it must anyhow control the conflicting

forces either by spiritualizing or by destroying them.

Nature unveils her secrets before this law of harmony and endows the mystic with a rare vision. Harmony is the most effective method of untying the hard knots of the sleeping soul. Harmony moves the universal frame, opens the vision and carries the soul to the infinite.

But this harmony in the depth of being which the mystic experiences gives him the masterful elasticity in active life, and he goes on adapting in a way that elicits admiration and sometimes surprise. He is anxious to quicken the moral and the aesthetic sense of social life. And, naturally the mystic dreams the dream of a righteous order and is anxious to actualize it. Success or defeat does not trouble him, for he is convinced of ultimate victory. And he is not troubled at the sight of destruction; he knows it is not destruction. The urge of fine creation is immanent in it and the mystic is moved by it.

The Meaning of Destruction

Destruction to the mystic is the promise of new life, the emergence of new forms. Individual as well as society finds new lives through convulsions. No doubt, it may take long

to restore the equilibrium and to move new forces still the confusion is no confusion to the mystic, for he feels this to be also an experience terrible in its delight; terrible because it is unusual, and the soul is accustomed to a normal equilibrium of the ordered society and not to the loss of equilibrium and confusion which destruction implies. The deep mystery of destruction is, therefore, hidden from it. The clinging to life makes it impossible to realize the sublimity of the terrible and the fierce. Naturally, therefore, it fights shy of destruction.

But the mystic feels the inevitableness and the beauty of destruction. It offers him an opportunity to transcend and see an aspect which others cannot welcome, far less silently enjoy. The experience of passing of the stream of life into the source with the loss of the individuality is an experience which only the mystic can enjoy, for he alone can retain and pursue the thread of his consciousness even through the process of destruction and can read a deep meaning in it. It is not destruction, but a temporary marching back of the flow of life. And this is necessary to infuse more life into it and to give it a finer creative urge. Destruction does not put out the light of life, but adds more lustre and

brilliance to it. Life has to pass through convulsions to make it more lively and fruitful ; the divine fecundity requires a falling off and a rejuvenation. This is the general plan of life. But in destruction two forms might be conceived : destruction as a natural process and destruction for human ends. Destruction as a natural process is a change in the physical and biological plane, and this change is accessory to new life and vitality. It is nature's plan in the animal and vegetable kingdom. Even here the mystic sees more. The influsion of fresh life is to him a divine law under a divine guidance ; and he sees, therefore, in the starting and the closing of the flow of life nature's separation from and union with the centre of life. But in higher planes new creation is preceded by convulsions and destructions, and these convulsions are reshaping of the social forces and constructions of new social ideas. These convulsions are the working of remoulding forces which are constantly active in creation. Continuous creation is always imperceptibly being preceded by a destruction, and this process is eternal both in nature and in human society. The process works silently in nature ; in human society it makes a flutter, for, here the forces are finer, adaptation more complex and the clinging to past adaptation and habituated life stronger.

Poetry, Philosophy and Mysticism

If affinity is the question, poetry is more akin to mysticism than discursive or logical philosophy, for poetic insight transcends the sensuous and conceptual activity and penetrates the heart of reality. But while poetry confines itself to the intuition of the expressive life, mysticism soars in the indefinite far beyond expression. Poetry is insight, mysticism is insight as well as life; the poet occasionally approaches the indefinite, more often he confines himself to the search of the indefinite in the definite; the mystic moves in the indefinite, the definite has no charm for him. And even if he cannot completely transcend the definite, he moves in the definite unconsciously by adaptation, but his being is fixed in the indefinite. The poet suffers limitation, for he has not the whole being of nature and man revealed unto him. He is carried often by aesthetic intuition and actuated by synthetic insight and combines matter and form. The mystic has no limitation, for he is not confined to a particular phase or faculty of his being. He is the rare soul with a subtle being, which is responsive to all the vibrations of life in immanent expression and transcendent revelation. He sees the being in its

naked simplicity and is conversant with the symphonies of all chords of life and consciousness. His method of approach puts him on a superior position and affords him a better facility to feel and read the musings as well as the silence of life. Philosophy works out a conceptual unity, poetry an aesthetic unity, and mysticism a transcendental unity. Philosophy excels in conceptual construction, and poetry in aesthetic construction. Mysticism excels in contemplation and quiet. If the mystic is creative, he can be creative in all spheres of activity, but he prefers the delight of the equilibrium to the joy of creation. He remains often in neutral equilibrium. The mystic life is pre-eminently the life of vision, though, at times, it can be active, still its activity is not its being. He has no definite task, though he can take to all tasks. Such is the elasticity of the mystic life.

PREDESTINATION AND HUMAN FREEDOM

The controversy of free will and determinism has no meaning for the mystic, for the mystic appraises the problem in a different light. The mystic is anxious to get to the source of life and the freedom of psychical causality has no charm for him.

Even the little freedom which the soul possesses in the order of creative values can only rear for him a karmic obligation and fasten him with the sense of a divided personality.

The Master sees the way to freedom in another way. This he does by emphasizing,

(1) the freedom of indifference to consequences (ii. 47, 48, 91); and

(2) the identity of the individual and the cosmic will, i.e., by merging the individual will in the cosmic will (ii. 30).

The freedom of indifference to fruits of actions gives a poise and establishes an inner equilibrium in mental being and paves the way for complete freedom from attachment to desires. The freedom of indifference helps to establish the discrimination between the false ego and the true ego and that calm which is accessory to higher knowledge. In emphasizing the freedom of indifference the Gītā is anxious to free the agent from the claims of inclinations and to wake up in him the higher claims of duty. Inclination binds the soul, duty frees it. The Master has also to appeal to the motive of victory and its consequent enjoyment, to the prevalent conception of duty imposed by the station of life and the proferred attractions attached to such a life, but such an appeal is an

appeal to the natural man with a touch of religious sanction.

The freedom of indifference gives the quiet of detachment and frees the agent from the ruling of inclinations. Desires are no longer incentives to actions. Duty rules supreme. The subjective ethical conception of duty is replaced by an objective one, and the seeker realizes the immanence of the moral law. The moral order and the eternity of the moral law loom large before the vision and the seeker feels compelled to observe the moral law and to establish the moral order. Still, this order is the order of law and none can break it. But the moral order which the Gītā presents[1] is unlike the moral order depicted in Buddhism. The order is constantly vivified by the Divine Energy and is actually fixed in it. Buddhism conceives a moral order which rotates eternally on the law of Karma. The Gītā conceives the moral order kept up by an inherent law, the law of mutual and reciprocal services between gods and men (iii. 11, 12). The whole cycle of existence is an order kept up by such services, and whoever fails to recognize the law of reciprocity in moral life and is centred in his own interest cannot qualify himself

[1] Ch. iii. 9, 10, 11, 15, 16.

for the higher illumination. This unity of the moral order is to be felt and perceived by moral sense. The Gītā strikes a note of ethical realism inasmuch as it presents the reality and sacredness of the moral order and the imperativeness of the moral law which none can disturb with impunity. The moral order is not a shadow but is directly centred in the Divinity.[1] The order is maintained by the infusion of divine spirit. The ethical concept of duty is naturally sustained by the metaphysical concept of the immanence of divine life in the moral order, and as such the Gītā has been able to establish a pathway to reality through moral evolution and moral progress. The direct touch of God with the moral order has made it possible for the Gītā to transform moral life into spiritual life. For in the height of our moral being we feel that work is worship. Here duty is transformed into love. The rigidity of moral life is replaced by the elasticity of spiritual life.

The Gītā has not lent its support to the ancient theory of the worship of gods. The conception of a Godhead makes it easier for it to look upon all forms of duty as ultimately the fulfilment of

[1] Ch. iii. 15.

obligations to God and a preparation for the realization of the spiritual life. The Gītā is eloquent about the possibility of attaining an expansive vision through the fulfilment of moral order. This fulfilment presupposes the thread of reciprocal connection running throughout the creation which finally passes into the knowledge of the unity of being. The earlier theories of Karma have not this vision. The karmic law necessarily is the law of reciprocal necessity. But the Gītā in accepting the unity of being and its realization through the ever-expansive consciousness, transcends the rigidity of the karmic law and passes into the freedom of the spiritual life. The Gītā emphasizes the transformation of the ethical life from the crude sense of utility to the highest development of spirituality. The ethical life is the dedicated life. It is no longer the stirring of the natural man or the imperative of conscience. It becomes the illuminated life which feels the stirring of the undivided life. At this point, the soul passes beyond the opposites of predestination and freedom, for they are true of the divided soul and not of the illuminated spirit. The soul moves in the rhythm of divine life. It has lost the conceit of agency. It moves with the divine ways. It acts and does not act. It

moves and does not move. It works and does not work. Such is the elasticity and mobility of spiritual life.

When the soul has thus found its identity with the divine life, it really becomes free and goes beyond the destined course of life. The limited freedom in the karmic order is really no freedom, for it is a struggle in the world of causes and effects and the stirring is of the natural will of the man. In dedicated life the soul transcends its natural limitations. With the removal of limitations the soul finds the ease and the delight of free movement of spirit. Though, it is a member of the community of spirits and is guided by the inflow of the cosmic spiritual life, still it does not suffer a limitation of determinism. The real freedom lies in moving with the cosmic life and the more cosmically centred the spirit is, the more is it free. Determinism is out of the question here, for, here is nothing antagonistic in nature, and in the community of being all the forces work to the same end in unison and harmony.

The mystic is anxious to free the soul from the limitations of nature, and this he does by opening the cosmic consciousness. Analogy from relational consciousness to indicate the relations of

finite and infinite fails, for spiritual life transcends relations. To indicate in relational terms the infusion of cosmic consciousness in finite souls or the merging of the finite in the infinite is an inadequate description of reality. All that can be said is this, that as soon as the self is freed from the natural limitations, it enjoys an expansive life, no matter whether in that life it retains its individuality or not.

Herein, we have the highest determinism and the highest freedom; determinism in the sense that the finite soul as finite does not take its own initiative and freedom in the sense that it moves with the cosmic impulse and enjoys the cosmic being. The finite being and will have been completely subdued. They have no play.

Realism, therefore, does not fit in with the mystic consciousness. The mystic promises freedom in place of determinism of realistic consciousness. The whole bent of mystic philosophy lies in allowing an elasticity to life and consciousness which it seeks to develop. The mystical treatment of predestination and freedom is different from the psychological or the philosophical treatment, for the mystic is anxious to transcend, if not altogether to deny, the ordinary conditions of conscious life. His is essentially

an attempt to be fixed at the centre of consciousness and to be influenced by its expansive force.

The mystic sees the world of determinism and the world of freedom side by side, and he is alive to the immense possibility of free move in the world of determinism.

This freedom is the freedom of the control over nature, and in the march of life nature becomes subordinate to spirit; spirit, then, is capable of fashioning nature to make it a fit vehicle of spiritual expression and for the attainment of spiritual ends. This complete subordination of nature to spirit is the consummation of power, and the mystic finds nature ready to serve higher ends.

Mystics reach that height of consciousness from which it is easy to feel the arch-types of existence. They feel that these are the ultimate forces of creation. They become fit vehicles through which the divine ideation finds expression in the world of concrete effects.

The ideal ends are subtle forces which the mystic can feel as inherent in his nature, and which he can move to cosmic ends.

This of course is a general statement. In concrete cases the consummation is not always fully

realized. And, therefore, the mystic speaks of the degrees of realization and partial or complete assimilation of the divine nature in man. The assimilation is proportionate to the ascent in spiritual life.

'THE DEWDROP SLIPS INTO THE SEA'

The Gītā describes the mystic intuition in glorious terms. In the moment of exaltation, the seer has the intuition of immanence and transcendence of Reality.

The cosmic order to the seer is illuminated and vivified with divine light and life. And in this order the seer sees and feels the thrill of life in every move of creation, and the cosmic urge appears as a current of the divine life. The distinctions natural to realistic consciousness dissolve in this stage. The practical dualism of ethical consciousness and the distinctions of relational consciousness vanish away in intuitive light. The essence is seen everywhere the same, though the form differs. Spirit is the essence, spirit is the reality.[1]

But the stage of abstract intuition, in which 'the dewdrops are lost in the sea' is not at once

[1] Ch. vii. 7, 8, 11.

realized. On the path of realization the seeker has to cross stages of illumination which are equally absorbing and equally fascinating. And the danger lies in the possibility of the seeker being confined to the attractions of these stages and not pressing the quest up to the last. Mystics have uniform agreement amongst themselves, and naturally so, for their conviction comes from direct vision; if they disagree, it is possibly due to the differences of height attained in the quest.

Human frailty works here, and the aspects of divine life revealed are sought to be categorically set apart by a systematic logic. The experiences of higher mystic consciousness are so subtle and absorbing, and they succeed with such rapidity and swiftness that oftener than not the subtler differences are not perceived, and if the soul cannot maintain the transcendental attitude even in these stages, it stands committed to the manifested spiritual life and cannot appreciate its dignity in transcendence.

The spiritual life at its full has the task of realizing both the forms of intuition, concrete and abstract. The concrete intuition gives us the vision of God, the abstract, of Brahman.

Even this concrete spiritual life seems too deep for words. It is the ocean of being in which float the seeds of all existences. It is the over-soul which spreads out the thread of existence.

The mystic has here a sudden feeling of expansion, his personal consciousness and normal psychology for the moment are overshadowed. He has the experience of an expansive being, himself being held up, as it were, in a terrible void. Arjuna feels the immensity and the magnitude of being, before which his little soul is almost stupefied. This stupefaction is due to the sudden change from realistic consciousness and the attainment of a dizzy spiritual height.

It requires some adaptation before the mystic can stand at this height and regulate himself as the inspired seer and agent. The mystic consciousness cannot have permanent hold so long as the realistic consciousness persists.

The concrete realization endows the mystic with God-consciousness which widens his vision and inspires him with devotion and service. The concrete realization touches the whole man, draws out his spiritual nature and turns his faculties towards God. Each faculty gets its gratification and fulfilment, for each has the

infinite life to feel, to serve and to enjoy. In such experience the mystic has the best of life and the height of delight. The imperfections and shortcomings of his being and faculties have been removed; he enjoys their infinite expansion and unending elasticity.

Really the human consciousness is held up in the divine consciousness and the partial God-consciousness can feel the sense of distinction, and the illuminated soul still feels its difference from God. But when the full vision is reached it sees that cosmic consciousness is pervading everywhere and is the stay of all existences; it is a centre without circumference, an existence that has no beginning, no end. This cosmic consciousness is the fruition of the mystic life. The Gītā also accepts this.[1]

The self-conscious ascent in spiritual life is not the end of the mystic quest. The self-conscious ascent, therefore, cannot fully cross the relativity of such a life and is characterized by an inherent limitation, even in its highest soaring and loftiest intuitions.

The self-conscious ascent passes into finer illuminations, as it is freed from the limiting

[1] Ch. viii. 20, 21.

activities of the senses and as such it feels an expanse and vastness. It is in this sense super-sensuous realization.

The super-sensuous realization should not be mistaken for transcendent consciousness. It is a soaring in the concrete life and has not been cut off from the thread of the finer oscillations of life. However fine and expansive it may be, it is still the concrete.

While emphasizing the super-sensuous ascent the Gītā has not overlooked the plunge into the cosmic consciousness. The quiet of transcendence together with the finer expression and urge of the super-conscious self have been the mystic ideal of the Gītā.

How such a transcendence is consistent with the super-sensuous self, is more than what the mystic can say. The mystic is a practical idealist. The emergence of a fine self is the direct experience in the mystic path; equally direct is the disappearance of the concrete hold of consciousness and life; but how the concrete emerges into being and falls off in the transcendence are not problems with the mystic. The mystic perceives and feels this oscillation of being, its concentration and diffusion, but he does not apply any thought category to explain it.

He, on the other hand, is exclusively absorbed in enjoying the infinite life in diffusion and concentration.

The mystic is anxious for the security of being, and this he attains by a complete denial of the sense of separateness and division. The least difference is painful, and the mystic is anxious to remove it. The mystic soul is ever expanding, and the search does not stop until the end is reached in complete expansion.

The finite concentration and convergence has a history, and this history is really the realization of a divine purpose. Human history is not totally human; it is an unceasing approach to the assimilation of divine life. Man makes history, but history reveals the story of divine life in concentration. The mystic sees life always in divine glory and nothing that passes in nature or humanity is meaningless to him. Everything possesses a deep meaning. It lays emphasis on all expressions of spiritual life in the concrete. Thus every move of activity and feeling finds a place in the mystic life of the Gītā. The divine life has its outlet through all the faculties of the soul.

Spiritual life in transcendence and in immanence has been the implication of the Gītā ; and this has

been made possible by the doctrine of Māyā. Māyā is, in the Gītā, not only the principle of limitation, but a limitating principle which is also shining (divine). Whatever its epistemological implications may be, it has offered spiritual possibilities in immanent order in its causal and finer aspects.

The Gītā appears to have recognized the spiritual ends in a spiritual hierarchy; and since spiritual life is essentially a life of insight, it cannot throw away the intuitions of immanent consciousness, but readily accepts them, as with them follow the new orders of realization and experience. These experiences have values in so far as they offer satisfaction to the finer instincts of self, and so long as they are not overshadowed by still higher revelations, they are regarded as true. The Gītā has, therefore, been able to set forth and harmonize the different spiritual experiences and implications, and there is a tendency in the Gītā to synthesize the values of these experiences so long as the conscious life has its expression in concentration. And so long as life still holds on in concentration, the active urge and the devotional wonders are to be looked upon as forms of spiritual expression, for in each case there is the pouring out and reception of the

spiritual life. Service and love throw open the flood gate of spiritual energy and become immediately the expression of spiritual life. The concrete life is, therefore, a phase in spiritual life.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The description of Bucke's cosmic consciousness reads like what we call the God-consciousness of the Gītā. Bucke describes the cosmic consciousness in the following terms. Cosmic consciousness 'is a third form, which is as far above self-consciousness as is that above simple consciousness. It is supra-conceptual. The cosmic consciousness as its name implies, is the life and order of the universe. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment or illumination which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence, would make him almost a member of a new species. To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elation and joyousness and a quickening of the moral sense which is fully as striking and more important both to the race and the individual than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these come what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction

that he shall have his, but the consciousness that he has it already'.[1] Such a mystical illumination is still in the order of expression and speaks of limitation. It is the revelation of finer being and subtler powers which are associated with super-sensuous self. The initiate feels this and is drawn towards it. But still such consciousness feels the display of forces; it does not qualitatively differ from the self-conscious life we commonly enjoy. It quickens that life and fosters cosmic imagination and cosmic sense. The quickening of the moral sense and the delightful beatific vision bespeak still of the concrete hold of life. The cosmic consciousness of Bucke is a finer urge in the personal consciousness which gives forth finer vibrations and delights. It is still a play of consciousness in its immanent expression. It feels the rhythm of a cosmic life and moves in unison with this rhythm. Each move of this rhythm brings unto it a new experience, a rejuvenated being, and in the course of growing fineness, the inner realms of existence and their wealth of power, delight and knowledge stand revealed; but the ray of personal consciousness

[1] A quotation from Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness in the *Tertium Organum*, page 312.

still holds and the centre of cosmic feeling and consciousness still remains personal. A sense of limitation still pursues the cosmic consciousness of Bucke.

VISVARUPA (THE COSMIC PICTURE)

The beatific vision of which Arjuna has a glimpse is of the profundity of being in its beauty, sublimity and fierceness. The Divine Life is presented here in its bare nakedness, and its brightness is equally matched by its fierceness. The Divine Life stands revealed in its beauties of destruction and beauties of preservation. The shining form of the Master (xi. 11) with its glories surpasses the beauties of the orbs of heaven (xi. 12). The magnificence of its being is surprising by its vastness (xi. 11). It is terrible in its brightness and sublime in its immeasurableness (xi. 17). It moves the cosmic wheel and preserves righteousness. It bridges the distance between earth and heaven. The cosmic existence stands animated by its being and is overpowered by its energy (xi. 19). The devas run into it. They stand frightened and prayerful before it (xi. 21). Multi-coloured, multi-faced, its being touches the sky and

afflicts the soul (xi. 24). It is the fire of destruction and the wind of confusion.

The mystic vision is not, therefore, merely the lightning flush of divine splendour and the incomparable sweetness of the divine bliss. It comprehends also the vision of the terrible in the Divine. The cosmic consciousness presents the Divine Life in complete, in its ineffable light and untellable fierceness.

A Comparison

The cosmic consciousness as conceived by Bucke and the cosmic consciousness as depicted in the Gītā are almost similar, but the one presented by the Gītā seems to be fuller. It presents the Divine Life in its splendour as well as in its fierceness.

Moreover, the Gītā presents the subtler perception of the Divine Life as permeating the finer existences and controlling them by its power. The divine urge is the urge behind all urges of the manifested and the unmanifested nature. The Gītā feels the pulse of cosmic life not only in human society but also in the forces of nature and the shining forces of the gods. The cosmic life is exhibited in nature, in human society and in the regulating and the controlling forces of the

devas. It permeates the air, the fire, the sun and the moon, the cosmic creative agent (xi. 39). It is before, it is behind, it is on all directions. It covers the whole existence. It is all (xi. 40).

Arjuna has the vision of the Divine in its ineffable beauty (xi. 5), undying glory (xi. 9), immeasurable holiness and unlimited expanse (xi. 1). The sense of division disappears in this ocean of existence. The moral sense and aesthetic consciousness are overpowered (xi. 40). In fact the holds of personal life are lost. Such is the wide transformation of consciousness, such seems to be the expansion of consciousness, that almost a new life with new intuitions and revelations seems to be in sight.

But still such a life does not completely differ from the unilluminated consciousness, for it is still the personal life with the intensity of finer feelings and finer consciousness. It is not complete absorption. The Gītā is eloquent about the expansive personal consciousness and its spiritual possibilities; but it is not altogether silent about the final consummation in the Absolute where the distinctions of Bucke's cosmic consciousness fade and disappear. If the Divine consciousness is super-sensuous, still it is not freed from limitations of expression. In the

Absolute consciousness, this limitation also ceases and the stirring of life is hushed into silence.[1]

It is the abysm of which Shelley sings in his 'Prometheus Unbound'

Through the greys void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone
Down, down!
In the depth of the deep,
Down, down!

MAYA AND THE WORLD OF CHANGE

The world of change is an order that has its occasional rise and fall in the Absolute. The Gītā has nowhere called the world an illusion. Māyā stands as the principle of change.

Māyā has been used in different senses. Īśvara is the meeting point of immutable and mutable principles. Māyā is the principle of change and mutation. It is the eternal becoming.

[1] *Vide* ch. xii. 3, 4, 5.

It is dependent on Īśvara.[1] Māyā has the other sense of denoting the two aspect or elements of Īśvara's being, prakṛti and puruṣa, matter and consciousness. They are the lower and higher natures of Īśvara.[2] Māyā has, again, the other sense of denoting lower prakṛti, in which God casts the seeds of creation.[3] Māyā has the sense of causing illusion and ignorance. It is the source of delusion.[4] It is true of mortals but to God there is no such delusion.[5] Māyā is both avidya and vidya, as avidya, it affects the human souls, as vidya, it gives them liberation.

There is nothing in the Gītā to indicate the complete unreality of the world of change; on the other hand the Gītā emphasizes the immanence of Īśvara. Īśvara embraces the world of finite souls and nature.

COSMOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GITA

The Gītā accepts from the Sāṁkhya its cosmology. The cosmic order is evolved out of prakṛti. Prakṛti throws out the cosmic order under the direction of Īśvara and withdraws the order when the starting force has run out. In evolution

[1] *Vide* Gītā xiv. 3. [2] *Vide* xiii. 19; vii. 4, 5.
[3] *Vide* xiv. 3; ix. 8. [4] *Vide* viii. 14; vii. 13, 25.
[5] *Vide* xiv. 3; ix. 8.

the aggregate adṛṣta, the self-created destinies of souls are equally operative. The adṛṣta is the dynamic potency, and so long as the soul is not free, it has an influence over prakṛti which it quickens to stress and evolve. By a pre-established harmony the quickening forces of the collective adṛṣta act at a time, and the prakṛti becomes operative. Scientifically each soul is fixed up with prakṛti. To the ordinary thinking, the soul naturally appears as a spiritual-material reality, the material under the guidance of the spiritual builds up an organism with functions and faculties. To the scientific mind, the discrimination of spirit and matter in the spirit-matter unit is not evident. The scientific interest is centred in this unit and the evolution of it into a functional being. The scientific mind at once accepts the unity as ultimate. It remains for philosophic insight to go deeper and differentiate spirit from matter and read the history of evolution in matter and not in spirit. Indian philosophy is, in the main, unanimous in confining evolution to the spiritual-material unit, and not to spirit; for spirit, be it finite or infinite, is eternally complete and self-contained. It has expression, but not evolution. The seeming evolution is not referred to the human soul (jiva),

which is both spiritual and material; and evolution means the emergence of finer or grosser functions according to the inherent tendencies or forces transmitted or acquired. These tendencies are inherent in the 'matter' of the unit, and they work out the ends of life and knowledge. The Sāṁkhya combines in it the scientific and metaphysical view-points. Scientifically, the soul is fixed up in and with matter, metaphysically it is not, though it so appears. The metaphysical vision gives us transcendental knowledge; the scientific view gives the evolution, cosmic and individual, of mind and body and their functions.

Spirit does not play any part in the evolution, for it is non-attached and indifferent to the cosmic history. This conclusion of the Sāṁkhya has been to a certain extent modified by the Gītā. Though, the Gītā decidedly, follows the Sāṁkhya in its scheme of evolution, still the infusion of spirit and the consequent modification of prakṛti appears to be an evident conclusion of the Gītā. But in this infusion spirit is not in any way affected. The Gītā has here clearly a theistic implication. But for this infusion of spirit, the whole evolution would have been an unconscious adaptation. The Gītā is definitely clear that prakṛti gives out the whole

creation. The guidance of spirit is traced in the orderly evolution and in the ends which the functions serve.[1] Since the evolution is a move in the order of nature, encompassed by spiritual order, the history of evolution acquires a spiritual significance. This infusion of spirit into nature has integrated nature with spirit. How this integration between nature and spirit takes place is not explicit in the original text. There is a clear indication that nature is subordinate to spirit and is guided and controlled by it. The creative matrix is subordinate to spirit. This subordination is complete in God but incomplete in man. Because of this incomplete subordination man suffers from an apparent ignorance and surrenders himself to the promptings of nature. Evolution in the case of the individual is due to the ceaseless promptings of nature and the busy adaptation of finite monads to the influences of nature. These influences stir the finite monads to responsive activity, and this in turn gives rise to functions to meet the influences. Scientifically considered, nature, under the influence of an unseen factor, has an unconscious adaptation; for spiritual infusion is not seen by the scientific

[1] *Vide* Gītā, chap. ix. 8, 10.

mind. Though the Sāṁkhya has maintained an unconscious adaptation, yet it has frankly confessed that evolution is not possible without some influence of puruṣa. Puruṣa is indifferent about it. The Gītā is more explicit about this infusion of spirit than the Sāṁkhya.

Apparently the equilibrium of prakṛti is disturbed when time is ripe for evolution. The collective self-creative forces disturb the equilibrium of prakṛti and the infusion of spirit introduces orderly regulation in the evolutionary process. Destiny (adṛṣta) quickens evolution, spirit harmonizes the forces and sets them to fruition.

The Gītā does not enter into the details of evolution but makes a general indication of the cosmic elements brought out in the process, and they are traditionally the same. The Gītā followed the Sāṁkhya scheme. All the cosmic elements of Sāṁkhya have found a place in the Gītā. The evolution-series is the same: (1) Abyakta or prakṛti, the originative cause. Abyakta connotes unstable homogeneity, prakṛti denotes creativeness.[1] It comes, then, to signify a homogeneity that passes into heterogeneity. The indefinite homogeneous takes definite shapes and

[1] *Vide* chap. iv. 6.

forms, Prakṛti manifests three guṇas: sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is expressive, rajas is creative, tamas causes inertia.[1] Life is expressive when sattva dominates, it is vibrative when rajas dominates, it is dull, when tamas dominates. (2) Prakṛti has its transformation into buddhi, (3) buddhi into ahamkāra, (4) ahamkāra into manas, the five senses and the five organs of activity and the five taanmātras. Nothing new has been added to the Sāṁkhya scheme.[2] The equilibrium of prakṛti is disturbed by the infusion of spirit. This infusion disturbs the equilibrium and starts the evolution. The evolution is, therefore, an indication of a spiritual purpose. But for this, the intrinsic interest in evolution would have disappeared, and the manifested life would have lost its charm. The subordination of prakṛti and the infusion of spirit in it gives a spiritual meaning to evolution. It makes the divine influence a direct force and power even in the immanent life.[3]

These elements are cosmic, though they perform psychological functions. They are original elements, and the whole series has an objective existence. And the Sāṁkhya does not accept the

[1] *Vide* Gītā, chap. xiv. 5. [2] *Ibid.* chap. xv. 9.
[3] *Ibid.* chap. xiv. 3.

formation of antaḥkaraṇa from cosmic elements. No doubt, some cosmic elements function as inner organs, some as objects received through the senses, but these are the functional interactions of the elements. Such functional interactions set up epistemological distinctions but cannot give the knowledge of the elements and their serial evolution. Such knowledge awaits deeper and subtler perception attainable by yogic intuition. The cosmic elements have two-fold functions: (1) cosmic, and (2) psychological. The former is creative, the second is expressive: relational and intuitive. Mahat combines both the functions, ahamkāra performs both, manas, and the senses, only the second. Buddhi and ahamkāra have in them the creative, the regulative and psychological functions. Knowledge in the philosophic and scientific sense can be given by buddhi; powers, occult and mystic, are ascribed to it. Ahamkāra is the moving power that runs through the organs of sense, the prāṇas and the elements. Ahamkāra combines the elements and gives a unity to the evolutes. Its hold is great in the vital and the sense-life. Ahamkāra is the concentration of the mental-vital life and forms the egoistic consciousness. It receives the dim light of the soul which is not bright enough

to kill the formation of egoistic consciousness. It binds the self to a false egoism. It is the I-consciousness centred in the prāṇic oscillations, the sense-activity and their gratifications.

The Gītā enumerates the fundamental functions of mental consciousness. These are desire (īcchā), aversion (dveṣa), pleasure (sukham), pain (dukham), mental consciousness (cetanā), patience (dhairyam).[1] Desire represents the stirring to fulfil the demand of organic and mental life. Aversion is the negative stirring to keep aside a thing positively harmful and disagreeable. Pleasure is the sense of delight due to an agreeable feeling. Pain is the opposite. Cetanā is the reflected conscious activity of the mind. Patience is the inner power of holding on in calmness.

[1] *Vide* Gītā, chap. xiii. 6.

CHAPTER III

THE ASCENT

The Ascent—The Gītā and the other forms of Mysticism—Disciplines—The Vital Body—Modern Vitalism and Prāṇism—Prāṇāyāma, the Control of Prāṇa—Evolution and Prāṇāyāma—The Conception of Devās—The Gītā and Pūrva Mimāṁsā—Culture of Will—Reciprocal Relations between Prāṇic and Will Cultures—The Path of Devotion—Centralization (Contemplation)—Illumination.

THE ASCENT

THE descent of the soul has been traced. It remains now to trace the ascent of man towards the perfection of his own being and the illumination of his soul. The pristine purity of the soul is never lost. In fact, evolution or perfection is mostly of the functions with which the soul is naturally endowed and not of the soul. The soul, in its nativity, is a ray of the divine life and never loses its divinity. The ascent is, therefore, the emergence of fine powers. The struggle for man in its spiritual ascent is to get over the claims of natural life and to spiritualize all the functions

with which he is endowed. Spiritual life in its ascent is an urge towards the opening of fine and delicate powers inherent in the soul and to rid them off their grossness. The grandeur of the gospel lies in its approach to the spiritual ideal not through any particular function. It is anxious to open all the gates of the inner man to admit an inflow of spiritual life. The spiritual life, therefore, appears as fixed in divine wisdom, expressed in compassion, embraced in love, poured out in service, and active in transforming forces to divine ends. The concrete spiritual life has these expressions. It does never lose its spiritual hold, and, therefore, every move or turn is an expression of spiritual life cut off from nature and her claims. The Gītā presents the synthetic ideal of spiritual life and does not ignore the spiritual life in its concrete expression even as it recognizes the spiritual life in its transcendent depth. The spiritual ideal, therefore, transcends the static rest and the dynamic move of life. It appears as quiet when it actually moves. It appears as restive when it is actually quiet. ' The active life of response to the temporal order, the contemplative life of response to the transcendent order are united and firmly held together, by that eternal fixation of the spirit,

the perpetual willed dwelling of the being of man with the incomprehensible Abyss of the Being of God.' [1] 'It is truly contemplation as activity and activity as contemplation.' [2]

THE GITA AND THE OTHER FORMS OF MYSTICISM

The Gītā presents a transcendental mysticism with a strong note of devotional consciousness. It differs from the exclusively transcendental mysticism of the Sāṁkhya and the Vedānta as well as from the sacrificial mysticism of the Mimāmsā and the Prāṇic mysticism of the Yoga. The Master has not rejected anyone of them but in an enlightened vision he has successfully combined the secrets and truths of these forms of mysticism. The attempt in the Gītā is synthetic not only in philosophy but also in Mysticism. The Gītā represents the unity of the forms of inner culture. We may safely represent its mysticism as synthetic. And this is, because, the Gītā pays due regard to all forms of discipline then in vogue and sees their practicability and fitness as methods of illumination.

[1] Vide *Ruysbroeck*, by Underhill, p. 185.
[2] *Vide* 'a quotation from R. C. Moberly', in *Studies in Mystical Religion*, by R. M. Johnes, p. 17.

The Gītā records the discordant notes of the earlier forms of mysticism, the discordance of knowledge (jñāna) and service (karma), the discordance of devotion (yoga) and philosophy (sāṁkhya), the discordance of contemplation (dhyāna) and science (vijñāna). With a wonderful penetration the Gītā sees their respective fitness in mystic preparation and final values and illumination. The Gītā is nothing if not an attempt at recounting the values of the different methods of approach. It shows how the human mind is anxious to get to the infinite life, and how to this end, his whole being moves. This synoptic attempt has been made possible through the synthetic conception of life. The Gītā sees through the dualism of the Sāṁkhya, the difference between the finite and the infinite and the identity of the finite and the infinite, and it moulds a system in which every one of these elements has a place but in a modified form. The inanimate nature or prakṛti is subordinate to Īśvara. The human soul is a spark of the infinite, and gods, the shining deities, are the creative and the preservative forces of nature, reflections in concrete of the infinite life. It has, therefore, found it possible to appraise the values of the respective cultures in view of the above synthetic

vision. The Gītā is a serious attempt at reconciling the partial truths then prevalent.

The Gītā does not give importance to the side issues of the methods. On the other hand it shows an inward understanding of them and their participation and mutual help in the life of fulfilment. This method is really the synthesis of yogas or disciplines. The grandeur and the sublimity of the gospel have been intensely enhanced owing to its appreciation of different methods of approach and their combination into a fine spiritualistic system.

The Gītā presents

(1) the path of service;

(2) the path of contemplation;

(3) the path of controlling vital forces;

(4) the path of moving the shining forces of nature (Devas);

(5) the path of devotion; and

(6) the path of transcendental illumination.

And it is a wonder that it sees that the one fits in with the other in our spiritual search and illumination. The Gītā finds no conflict between these paths; on the other hand, it thinks each of them as essential. The charm of the Gītā lies in this, and it reminds us of a memorable saying of Plotinus. 'There are then different roads by

which this end may be reached. The love of beauty which exalts the poet, that devotion to the one and that ascent of science which makes the ambition of the philosopher and that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection—these are the great highways conducting to the height above the actual and the particular where it stands in the immediate presence of the infinite who shines out as from the depths of the soul.'[1]

So great is the necessity of the infinite for the life of man that man has in all ages sought it through all the gateways of the soul. The highest privilege of man is to taste the infinite life through all his faculties, and mysticism fully blossoms when all the chords of our being vibrate with the touch and embrace of infinite life. There is in man a deep but often unconscious feeling and anxiety for the infinite, and philosophy, science, religion, art and poetry are in fact urges towards the comprehension of the infinite.

The Gītā foresees the modern division of Anthroposophy of man into the 'man of the head', the 'man of the limbs' and the 'man of the

[1] Plotinus's letter to Flaccus.

rhythmical body '.[1] The philosophic contemplation represents the first, the life of service, the second, the path of moving the vital forces, the third.

Man is endowed with contemplative, reflective, devotional and active faculties, and it is through these faculties that the soul is anxious to break the bondage and limitation. The human soul is, in the Gītā, atomic, but this atomic ego stirs eternally to enjoy the comprehensive life. This striving is the indication that the soul is anxious to overstep its atomicity and to feel the infinite life. As the insight becomes finer, the soul enjoys subtler experiences and directly feels the brighter realms of existence which the untrained souls cannot realize, but which are facts to the trained souls.

Disciplines

Before the disciple can blossom into the ideal man of the Gītā he has to pass through disciplines. Before the inner culture can be effective, the disciple must have a course of dietic and moral regulation. Mystic discipline touches the essential being of the seeker and fits it for the

[1] *Vide* H. Koester's Anthroposophy.

higher reception of life and consciousness. Mystic life is not possible, if the being is restive or dull. The mental being must have a fitness, before it can aspire to mystic consciousness. The luminosity and the calm are the essential requisites to mystic consciousness. The luminosity of being can give the fixity in śraddhā. Śraddhā gives the strength of faith and the security of hope. The bent and the ascent of the soul which śraddhā implies are the true index of our being, and the difference in the bent and the ascent has been mainly due to the nature and character of our being.[1] The impetuous demand of rājasic impelling with the comparative inertia of tāmasic clouding can hardly be helpful to the perception of higher truths and their assimilation in life; and unless the being vibrates with the harmony and rhythm of sattvā, it can hardly receive help and light. The mystic is, therefore, rigorous in its demand of moral qualifications in the beginning, though it allows the highest freedom in the end. Such is the law: to obey is to command. If it is true literally anywhere, it is in the mystic life. The discipline is strictly rigorous.

[1] *Vide* the Gītā, ch. xvii. 2, 3.

The disciplines that are mentioned in the Gītā are varied. There is the discipline for the purification of the physical sheath. Our mental being and attitude to some extent are consequent upon the vital currents of the physical body and the nutrition that is drawn from what is assimilated has also an effect direct or indirect upon the oscillations of the inward life.

The Gītā nicely puts it that man's inward being determines his attitude to life; its fineness or grossness plays an important part in our bearing of life and conduct and consciously or unconsciously becomes the determinant of our adaptation in life. And what the Gītā calls the sattvā is the essence of our being; the food has its influence upon it. The Indian teachers hold that the finest essence of our food goes to give virility, quickness and strength—a pure being to quicken the evolution of higher intelligence and powers. The humours of our body must not be infractuous but must be mild and must work harmoniously to give that healthy feeling which keeps pace with the higher workings of the inward self. The body must be fit, before it can vibrate with the infusion of spirit and power. Like draws like. The pure soul with a pure body

naturally draws powers that are beneficent; the impure soul with an impure body is naturally subject to influences from cruel and destructive forces of nature. Not only this. The former gradually make for the realization of the higher spiritual powers, the latter evolve vices that stiffen the soul and kill its spiritual possibilities and gradually make a beast of man. Man can be classified into different types according to the dominating attitude of his being. The sattvic is introverted type, the rajasic is the extroverted type and the tamasic is the dullest specimen. The first is quiet in self, and its activities are spontaneous, the second is assertive. Its actions and attitudes differ accordingly. The division of sattvā, rajas and tamas has been extended to food in cognizance of the subtle influences, it originates in man. The sattva in food goes for vitality, strength, health, organic ease and happiness. The rajas in food goes for blind activity; instead of a soothing quiet it vibrates being passionately. The tamas in food causes inertia and ignorance.[1]

The disciplines of the physical body and the mind are called tapas. Three forms are

[1] xvii. 7, 8, 9.

mentioned: the tapas of body, the tapas of speech, and the tapas of mind.

The tapas become natural and easy when sattva has an even flow in life. The respectful attitude to the wise and the elders, the practice of cleanliness of body and openness of heart, the freedom from sexuality and envy are the elements of the first. The speech that does not cut, that gives the truth, sweet and agreeable, that gets purified by the repetition of the Vedic texts and powerful by the force of Om is the tapas of speech.

The tapas of mind gives the joy of mental quiet and freedom from anxieties; it fosters universal sympathy, gives self-control and promises self-luminosity.[1]

The Vital Body

The next cover of the soul is the vital sheath which is intermediate between the dense cover and the mental sheaths. Vitality is the support of the physical body and is practically the mainstay of the system. It regulates the organic functions. Prāṇa is the vitalizing force. It has both a restricted and a wide use. In the restricted sense prāṇa regulates the respiratory system. In

[1] *Vide* Madhusudhan's *Commentary*, xviii. 14, 15, 16.

the wide sense prāṇa is the vitalizing power embedded in and controlling the nervous system. It is the energy that flows in nerves and nerve centres.

Prāṇa holds the system and gives unity to its different parts. The Gītā affirms with the Sāṁkhya that a prāṇic dynamism is at the root of all life and motion; it covers and sustains every bit of life. But the prāṇic dynamism is equally manifest everywhere. The Sāṁkhya affirms that its difference in manifestation in the kingdoms of being is due to the suppressed or animated dynamism. The suppressed dynamism is due to the dominance and prevalence of tāmasic ahamkāra. Prāṇa originates from the rājasic ahamkāra. The inertia of tamas has a dulling expression. The vaikharic ahamkāra originates prāṇa, and it is evident in the higher kingdoms of beings because the rajas prevails over the tamas in them. Allowance, no doubt, should be made for the special states and circumstances. It follows generally from the distribution of the guṇas that animal and human kingdoms have more manifest dynamism than the vegetable kingdom, though in men and animals there are occasions when tamas may dominate over rajas.

Prāṇa in its widest sense denotes cosmic energy behind the creation. It is the pervading energy that sustains and keeps up the cosmic evolution and is involved in all changes.

Prāṇa has been conceived as adhibhūta, adhidavia and adhyātma in the Upaniṣads. Adhibhūta-prāṇa is the force that sustains the inorganic kingdoms. It causes the oscillations and changes in the natural kingdoms. This prāṇa is undivided in the inanimate order, though it appears divided in its functions.

Adhyātma prāṇa is the vital force in the living being. It keeps up the organism. It causes anabolic, ketabolic and metabolic changes of the body. In fact, it is the principle that functions differently in the body, in the vital organs and in the senses. It is the main energy that binds up the system, keeps it up and energizes the senses, manas and buddhi.

It is customary to hold prāṇa to be moving respiratory, digestive, excretory, circulating and cerebral systems and centres, and thus to confine it to organic functions. But it cannot be denied that prāṇa works in subtler ways of developing the bodily system and moving the organs of sense and the higher manas and buddhi. Prāṇa is active everywhere:

it is the sustaining, supporting and moving principle.

Prāṇa has its rajas and sattva dominating at times. The distinction between potential and kinetic energy is a distinction without a difference. It is no difference in quality. It is only a distinction of passivity and activity. But the rājasic and sattvic prāṇa is a distinction according to the dominating element in its constituents. When the rājasic element dominates, the vital current becomes quick and intensive and it vibrates with swifter speed and greater effect.

The quick move of the vital being, besides being caused by its inherent force, may be accelerated by the stirring of desires. The desire-consciousness is kept up by vital being which in turn is quickened and reinforced by it. The former is the vital being in its causal and the latter in its effectual expression. All desires are forms of mental as well as vital quickening. This quickening of desire is not much different in quality from the quickening of prāṇa. The only difference is the pouring in of the mental energy in the form of desire. But the vitalizing force is the same—the disturbance of the prāṇic equilibrium and the rippling in the prāṇic current because of the intensive action of the rajas.

When the sattvic element dominates, the prāṇa becomes more voluminous, and the beats become slower and come at longer intervals. The dominance of sattvic prāṇa has the invariable effect of quieting down the impulses and of generating an organic ease and mental calm. The importance of prāṇa as vitalizing force can be better realized when the prāṇic oscillations are active in different ways and produce different organic tones of the being.

The sattvic prāṇa moves in rhythm and volume and such rhythmic movement silences the prāṇic confusion and disorder and has the unfailing effect of quickening up the prāṇic activity of the nerves and nerve centres. But this acceleration of prāṇic force does not produce the least disturbance in the prāṇic centres. It moves them to release the reserve prāṇic energy and increase the subtler vitality adapted to the subtler ends of heightened consciousness and knowledge.

The rājasic oscillation of prāṇa soon exhausts and spends up force and leaves the organism tired and fatigued. The sattvic oscillation fills the organism, specially the nerve-centres with new energy and vigour. It saturates the centres with power.

Adhidaiva prāṇa is the name attributed to the functioning of prāṇa in sustaining the shining forces called dēvas, the controlling agencies of nature.

Prāṇa is thus named differently according to its functions and applications. But what is important to note is that prāṇa is the principle immanent in the creative order in all its aspects. It is the creating, sustaining and transforming principle.

Modern Vitalism and Pranism

The modern theory of vitalism approaches the prāṇism of Hindu philosophy. Prāṇism is not merely the intra-organic functioning of the vital cells of the body. It has a wider import. It is the power creating and moving the universe. It is not only a physiological or biological principle. It is also a cosmic principle. Prāṇa supports every bit of existence.

Vitalism of Driesch and Creative Evolution of Bergson make the vital principle a cosmic one. The Elan Vital is the basic principle of the creative evolution. 'Bergson, Nietzche, Eucken, though they differ in their opinion as to life's meaning, are alike in this vision, in the stress they lay on the supreme importance and value

of life—a great cosmic life transcending and including our own.' [1]

The Indian teachers foresee this conclusion in the conception of prāṇa when they hold prāṇa to be a cosmic principle. Prāṇa is the creative, organizing and sustaining principle, not of the individual, but of the cosmos.

Vitalistic reality to the western mind is creative. 'Reality is pure creative life.' 'It evolves by means of its own inherent and spontaneous creative power.'[2]

Wonderfully enough, behind the manifest activism, prāṇa has a seeming rest and quiet, when the process of manifestation has not begun. It is prāṇa in its potential existence. It is prāṇa in its equilibrium. How prāṇa, the vital principle, can exist in such a bare potentiality or in its suspended activity is difficult to conceive, but such a state has been conceived and is asserted to be a matter of experience in some states of consciousness. Scientifically such an indefinite homogeneity of prāṇa is a valid conclusion, for such homogeneity can pass into definite heterogeneity. The passing into hetero-

[1] *Vide* Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 32.
[2] Vide *ibid.*, p. 34.

geneity is in fact the course to evolution. This individuation of prāṇa in definite centres is the beginning of creation. There must have been inherent necessity in prāṇic dynamism to pass into such heterogeneity. Science is silent and cannot trace any reason about the individuation of prāṇa. The eternal duration of Bergson represents the fundamental tendency of the Elan Vital to distribute and scatter itself. Spencer also conceives the tendency of an unstable homogeneity to pass into a definite heterogeneity. And this tendency is inherent. Philosophers form such hypotheses but they cannot give any reason why homogeneity passes into heterogeneity. The initial start in creation still remains a mystery. Indian thinkers conceive behind this prāṇic dynamism a cosmic will and move to creation. Such a will becomes a necessity inasmuch as a definite purpose and a plan are indicated in the order of creation. But this will is an immanent principle forcing and shaping from within and not from without. External adaptation and teleology have been replaced by immanent finality, and Indian thinkers are led to conceive the infusion of spirit even in the distribution of prāṇic dynamism.

Prāṇa is not the ultimate force. Behind it exists the still more subtle force of will. But the cosmic

will expresses itself through the stir of prāṇa. Will represents the creative principle and prāṇa is the carrier of this creative will. Prāṇa is all-pervasive, and with the stir of the creative will it thrills and becomes active. Prāṇism in its potentiality is suspension of activity, but with the stir of will its suspended activity is lost, and it becomes manifestly active. Without the control of will at its back the prāṇic activity is blind and is the source of confusion and disorder. But regulated activity and power of selection, though they appear as inherent in it, are ultimately due to the infusion of spirit and its close touch with it. This infusion of spirit is a new element in the Indian science of prāṇism. The vitalism of the West cannot see this infusion of spirit and thinks that vital forces are ultimate powers, and spirit, if there be any, instead of pouring itself into them is ultimately evolved out of the vital forces. In fact, their conclusion ends in vitalism and not in spiritualism. Their conception is that life is animation without illumination.

Some amongst them cannot see the unity of the vital forces and argue inductively that the collective vitalism of the body is due to the forces emanating from centres. Though in modern vitalism this conception has not found

favour, still vitalism suffers from inadequate apprehension of spiritual life. It reduces life to power and force but cannot grasp and embrace the subtler life of spirit.

If we are correct in our reading of the vitalistic movement in India, we are not far from the truth when we say that the view-point of Western vitalism has been anticipated in Indian thought. Hathayoga holds a form of vitalism not much different from the vitalism of the West. Hathayoga lays emphasis upon the control of Prāṇa and is anxious to produce a state of existence in prāṇic equilibrium. This state of existence is blissful inasmuch as it frees the seeker from the oscillations of prāṇa and installs him in the harmony of the causal, i. e. the finer expression of prāṇa. And, what is more, sometimes it produces a state of complete absorption and cuts him off from the divided life and its prāṇic vibrations. These vibrations exhaust prāṇa and, therefore, by an ingenious method, the teachers have tried to conserve prāṇa and the vital forces and save them from being dissipated. Their ideal is the conservation of prāṇa, for this conservation implies a greater enjoyment of the rhythmic oscillations of prāṇa and sometimes its absolute quiet in a suspended activity. But Hathayoga has not found ready

acceptance with more accurate thinkers who are anxious to control prāṇic forces and at the same time look forward to get to the higher forces of spirit. And the mystic teachers do not look upon Hathayoga with favour and are anxious to supplement the prāṇic control by some other forms of yoga (discipline). No doubt, in spiritual life its value is occasionally emphasized, inasmuch as it gives a control over prāṇic dynamism, helping the development of finer powers.

PRANAYAMA, THE CONTROL OF PRANA

Prāṇāyāma, the control of prāṇic dynamism, is not a new doctrine and is prevalent in India from ancient times. It finds mention in the Upaniṣads where greater stress has been laid upon prāṇa upāsanā, the culture of prāṇa. In the Gītā, its importance has been recognized as a part of a composite discipline. Though the Master does not deliver a long discourse on prāṇāyāma, yet he does utter the full and complete truth about it, the perfect meaning of which is not always comprehended.

Prāṇic control is a necessity in two ways: (1) to prevent the natural waste of powers by rhythmic regulation of prāṇa, and (2) to help the opening of higher powers and to establish a direct

connexion with the source of prāṇic dynamism. The control and the rhythmic regulation of prāṇa set it in right order and establish a prāṇic equilibrium which is always being disturbed by the inner sub-conscious forces inherent in our animal and mental life. The prāṇic equilibrium calms physical, animal and mental forces and establishes a complete control over them. The natural man is a prey to the forces and the prāṇic vibration in him is not orderly enough to give him a harmony and rhythm superior to the natural rhythm of organic life.

The natural man, besides suffering from an inelastic life and being, is not infrequently disturbed by the conflict of forces, his vision being often swayed by the blind forces of nature. These limitations work upon his vital being which is moved by a limited supply of prāṇic energy. If the prāṇa moves on with the natural rhythm of organic life, it may invigorate the senses, the organic and the mental being. But still it cannot draw from the universal prāṇic dynamism and make the body a fit vehicle of the cosmic prāṇa.

Prāṇāyāma, as the art of self-control, looks up to the opening of prāṇic energy pervading everywhere and inflow of the cosmic prāṇa in our

system as its consummation. The finite organism has a limited supply under its control, but wonderfully enough nature has provided for every being an unlimited source of energy in potential form which can be quickened to activity by practice.

Prāṇāyāma is not, as frequently understood, the control of breath and the respiratory organs, which is only an offshoot of it. It is essentially the control of the vital energy which moves the whole physical and mental being and is ultimately the control of nerve-forces and nervous energy. Prāṇāyāma is the art of moving the potential vitality and bringing prāṇic oscillations to an equilibrium. When the prāṇic oscillations are controlled, the respiratory organs are stopped, and the organism with the organs of activity and the senses have a temporary remission from active exercise.

When the prāṇic oscillations move in harmony, the apparent differences of prāṇas and their functions have occasional respite. The highest end which prāṇic-control aims at is to get to the source and draw from the store of prāṇic dynamism. And this is done when the equilibrium is perfect, and the vital-current flows quickly throughout the system. The immediate

effect is the merging of vibrative prāṇa in the expanse. The desire-impulses and the thought-forces are also finer forms of vitality and the finer prāṇa is at the base of the whole structure, organic and mental.

When the adept can get hold of the finer prāṇa, he really reaches the basic foundation, not only of his being, but of the whole cosmos. Prāṇa in its essence keeps up the unity between the adhibhūta, adhyātma and adhidaiva prāṇa. When the causal prāṇa has been got hold of, the adept becomes the greater wielder of powers, especially esoteric. The prāṇic control gives at once a free move of the subtle being; it grants a free elasticity of contraction and expansion of the finer and the gross body, the control over the forces of nature and an escape from the limitations of the laws of nature. The first is evident because of the elasticity of prāṇa itself. It expands. It contracts. When the prāṇic-dynamism is under control, the expansion and the contraction become easy and free. The forces of nature are in a way the adhibhūta prāṇa, i.e. prāṇa in its functioning of nature and since the prāṇic energy is continuous, the control over prāṇa at any centre is an access to the control over prāṇa at other centres.

It sounds strange, but it is a fact. The causal prāṇa is continuous and a mastery over it endows the adept with incredible powers. Nature obeys his call. The gift of an irresistible will is no less an important consequence. Will is the same as fine prāṇa and as the prāṇa moves in subtler vibrations, the will becomes effective intensively and extensively. It gets an immediate expansion. It acquires a directness. The individual will suffers in strength. But when the will is reinforced by the prāṇic infusion, it stirs with a new force and directness. A new force generates and moves the will spontaneously. At such a level the adept rises to the height of causal prāṇa, and the will no longer remains the divided will. But it becomes the undivided vital-will working in every move of life.

The body which intervenes between the prāṇic envelope and the physical body is the seat of animal propensities. Though the stirring of such a body comes from the desire body and prāṇic-envelope, still it clings to the fleshy cover and is a hard knot to untie. The desire-forms in the karmic body are fine and subtle, and they form the *materia* of the subtle body, but the subtle forms become materialized in the ethereal body that clings steadfastly to the

animal body. The physical envelope becomes dead when this ethereal body is no longer active.

To kill the animal propensities and to get the mastery over the animal impulses, it is necessary to free the body from the influence of the etheric body. The animal-self in man is not completely lost so long as the soul works in the divided life. It feels the limitation and the weight of the sheaths, and the limitation cannot be got rid of unless the soul is freed from the prākṛtic hold. Such a consummation is a far-off event, but in the spiritual ascent the etheric body can be destroyed by the indrawing of the higher prāṇic energy which either completely destroys it or transforms it and makes it a medium of transmitting the higher influence and powers. The infusion of the higher prāṇic-energy has the effect of practically destroying the etheric-body by completely transforming it from a vehicle of animal desires to a vehicle of divine purpose. In the concrete spiritual life such transformation is not only eminently desirable, but is a sheer necessity. Unless the physical and the desire bodies are completely spiritualized, the body and its demands act as a check to the spiritual life. Nowhere is this conflict of flesh

and spirit so great as in spiritual life. The common convention is to kill the animal life before the dream of a spiritual life can be materialized. This conflict has proved too much to be overcome, for it actually means the killing of a part of our nature. And not unoften the result has been the sad and dismal failure of such attempts.

Suppression has never been successful. It is just fighting against the winds. The lower impulses are too strong to be suppressed or killed. They are the index of the lower being in man, and to kill the being is to kill the man. Impulses stir because of a demand. Unless this demand or its root has been cut off, suppression is a futility and often results in a complete breakdown of our nervous being. Such has been the dismal consequence when there is persistent demand of the lower being and equally persistent attempt of checking it by blind will. The enlightened self sees that suppression is not the path. Transformation should displace suppression. Suppression is the heroic remedy which puts off the lower urge for the moment but cannot kill it completely. None can kill a force. But the character of force can be changed by transformation.

The modern sex-psychology in its short-sightedness has made the sex life the base of our being. The libido which runs through the animal propensities is held to be the essence of our being. This vision is confined to the biological and animal being and suffers from the limitation of thinking that suppressed sex energy is the immediate cause of religiosity. This conclusion is sought to be affirmed on the experimental ground that in types of religious consciousness the sex element was previously strong and a successful suppression has been the transforming cause of the libido into religious consciousness. Such conclusions seek confirmation from the life history of great men.

(The sublimation of sex has been the cry of the age, but the simple truth is overlooked that sublimation of a crude impulse cannot change its nature and transform it into divine consciousness. Sublimation can refine the crude impulse, but this refinement cannot change the character of sex-consciousness.)

Mysticism quickens the animal as well as the spiritual being and since spiritual being is finer, it is touched only after the animal nature has been violently moved. And this violent move of animal nature and its consequent

calming down have been possibly the source of the hypothesis that the sex suppressed has been the guiding and transforming force in religious life. The violent eroticism is a phenomenon common in mystic lives. And naturally so, because mysticism is the search for the finest being, and before the fine being can stir up, the gross nature of man has to be eliminated and purified. The lower vehicles have inherent and acquired tendencies and demand satisfaction and do not give way. They set up false values and blind the clarity of vision, so that the soul gloats in animal satisfactions. When the mystic influence begins to be active, these forces of the lower being become vibrative to draw down the soul in their quagmire. The soul often succumbs to the professions of the lower being. In the darkness of ignorance the false values are mistaken for true perspectives, mistaken adjustments for avenues of right actions. In the spiritual ascent nothing hinders progress so much as the activity of these blind forces. They are the limiting forces of nature. They are active even in the wise, and when the light of wisdom does not shine brilliantly, even the wise fall a prey to them. Such is their strength, such is their hold upon life. The struggle is infinitely harder in the souls

where the natural desires and stirrings are strong.

The struggle becomes almost impossible for the souls eager to seek deliverance from their control, for by nature, these forces assert themselves most when they are stiffened to death. The mystic has the greatest fear of them, as they are quickly active in a fine rather than in a gross nature. A gross nature suffers a comparative inertia of being; the powers, good or bad, sleep in it. When the fine being vibrates in the mystic, the senses become quick, their professions subtle. And the struggle becomes more keen. Before the finest being can emerge, the finer being becomes active with all its possibilities; and the senses are strong when the rosy touch of desire enlivens them. The subtle connexion between the animal and the desire-body becomes active and the charms and attractions of the causal desires are transferred to the animal body.

The animal being is quickened and additional charm is added unto it by direct inflow of desires from the lower mind. And though in man evolution has advanced to the higher mental being, still it has not advanced to the extent of freeing it completely from the

influence of animal being. The complete subordination of animal being is, no doubt, an advance in the forward move of evolution, which has not been but remains still to be actualized.

The common man is stirred by the lower mind and the animal being which are in constant touch with the vital being. He is the vital-animal-mental complex. The waves of higher mental being are not much evident in him. And it is not logic, far less good psychology, to think that the suppression of the vital-animal-mental complex can force the evolution of the higher mental being into the blossoming of religious consciousness. Suppression can increase the inner urge and save the vital-animal energy from exhausting itself in the natural outlet. It can give a quick vitality and animated physical being, but it cannot promote higher and finer evolution.

Suppression may become fruitful in the negative way of retaining the vital current in undiminished vigour and the animal being in ever refreshing vivacity if it is natural and spontaneous. Forced inversion is not unoften attended with dire consequences. Such natural and spontaneous flow of the vital-animal energy is more an exception than the rule.

The higher mental being, including the mental-spiritual self, is an entity distinct from the lower mental-animal-vital self though it is enveloped in the coarser sheath. The higher mental being has direct connexion with the finer vital urge, for prāṇic-vitality embraces the whole existence and is the stay of the complex integration. The gross prāṇa is connected with the gross body, the fine prāṇa with the subtle being. A fine urge is possible when the fine prāṇa is active. The lower being is purified and chastened by the infusion of fine prāṇa.

The greatest effect of prāṇāyāma lies in the continuous inflow of the prāṇic energy and the complete washing out of the gross elements of our nature to make the body, especially the vital-animal complex, a fit medium of the higher spiritual expression. Prāṇāyāma gives the quickened vitality and gradually changes or transforms the lower being completely to effect the easy and spontaneous expression of the spiritual being through the wonted course of life.

A conflict between the animal and the spiritual urges is experienced in spiritual life. It is used as an argument to show that the spiritual life is not possible before the lower being has been killed. But this conflict can be overcome

not by ignoring a part of our being, which is well-nigh impossible, but by completely transforming it by the infusion of the cosmic prāṇic current. Transformation becomes possible because of the grafting of the fine forces upon the gross being.

Prāṇāyāma in the wider and truer sense seeks to free man from natural urges, the longings of life and the clingings to desires, of the personal self and to restore a complete calm in his being in order that it may become a fit vehicle for the expression of the cosmic life and urge. Prāṇāyāma works out imperceptible changes in the body, and puts it under the direct control of the cosmic prāṇa which gradually eliminates the gross elements and transforms the lower being completely. This changes the animal magnetism and makes the animal being completely subordinate to the higher mental-spiritual being. The animal being is a bar to spiritual realization, for spiritual life cannot allow anything that can be obstructive of its even flow and uninterrupted activity. The ideal consummation lies in the complete conquest of the lower being and its gradual spiritualization, so that the native conflict between nature and spirit may be at its end, and nature, instead of being obstructive,

may become completely helpful to spirit and its demands.

And this spiritualization implies the constant infusion of spirit into the animal being. Spiritual life is a life of utmost expansion and finest transformation, and before the highest spiritual realization is enjoyed in complete spiritual transcendence, a change in the finer bodies is a necessity. But for this control of spirit over the vital and animal being, man cannot have that freedom of move, clarity of vision, and delicacy of being which are the main requisites of a spiritual life. Spiritual life is constantly in the making, and in the course of it it takes a fit body which can be a fit instrument of spiritual expansion and fulfilment in human life. Man suffers the limitation of a body, but the quickening forces of spiritual evolution are at work to eliminate this limitation by awaking the sleeping powers that can give fine vitality and tune of the inward being. Prāṇāyāma allows this elasticity of our vital being, and since the animal being in its essence is a form and an expression of the vital being, the control over the vital being and its move by the fine prāṇa has the invariable effect on the animal being. It finds a greater expansion and elasticity in the

urges of the fine prāṇic currents with which it is now surcharged and fitted up; and, therefore, its native play and delight in the life of sensibility are replaced by the bliss of spiritual life. The animal being is not completely destroyed; but it has a new starting and awakening in the spiritual life and the joy of the former is now totally changed. The Gītā does not contemplate the complete breaking off of the animal life, but it surely seeks to transform the animal life and make it a fit vehicle of spiritual expression. The life of sensibility which is so engrossing and absorbing is a real danger in the path of spirituality. The spiritual delight is different from the animal delight. It is calm and tranquil and does not make our being restive. The animal delight makes the being restive and does not touch the deeper chords of our being and naturally the delight it affords dies with the momentary satisfaction. The complete eradication of sensibility may sound well as an abstract ideal but it is surely an impossibility in the concrete life. Spirituality must, therefore, seek to transform this animal being and not completely deny it. The life of sensibility, therefore, must be swayed and controlled by the cosmic prāṇic urge. The impulses thus grow

fine, being becomes subtle. Sensibility will lose its sting and be an actual help-mate to spirit in the drama of earthly life. The mystics enjoy the delight of a finer animal being which is constantly refreshed by the wave of spiritual force. Sensibility is not killed. Nor is its satisfaction denied. Life moves in a new rhythm which allows satisfaction to each part of its being. Sensibility moves quickly to receive and enjoy the finer oscillations of being. Its tone becomes completely changed with the elimination of rajas and assimilation of sattva. The life of sensibility, instead of being a bar, becomes a great help to the spiritual life. It enjoys poise. So fine and delicate does it grow that it refuses to be swayed by rajas and throws away the rājasic impelling surely and spontaneously. Unless this consummation is reached, the seeker cannot enjoy spiritual expansion in his own little life. The mystic ideal suffers unless the body is able to completely carry out this spiritual urge on the physical plane. Prāṇāyāma is a great help to secure a fit body for a fit soul.

The yogic teachers conceive the complete control of prāṇa over the physical and vital being, over the mental being too, and, therefore, they have seen in it the great agency of not merely

controlling the respiratory and other organs of the body, but, ultimately, of moving the finer life in its higher expressions. The importance of prāṇāyāma lies in this that it establishes a link between the move of the finite life and the move of the cosmic life. Restricted vision confines prāṇa to finite centres and is not conscious of the cosmic prāṇa that is active in the details of creation. Prāṇāyāma is an effort to get hold of the cosmic prāṇa and to get our being guided and controlled by the cosmic urge.

The Gītā does not merely mention prāṇāyāma as a method obtained in a school of mystics. Although it has a bare mention of prāṇāyāma in two couplets in a short cryptic way,[1] it has there the whole implication and the meaning of prāṇāyāma.

The Gītā mentions two forms of prāṇāyāma. The one seeks to remove the functional differences between prāṇa and apāna, and the other seeks to immerse the prāṇa in the cosmic prāṇa. We should mention here that the Hindu physiology conceives different functional activities of prāṇa, and different nomenclatures are used to indicate the different functional aspects. That which controls

[1] *Vide* ch. iv. 27, 29.

the respiratory organ is called prāṇa; that which controls the digestive function is called samāna; that which controls the evacuation and the excretion of refuse matters is known as apāna; that which controls the regulation of the nervous system throughout the body is called vyāna; and that which controls the nerve centres of the brain is called udāna.

Prāṇāyāma aims at bringing the functional activities of the different prāṇas under control; this is done by the exercise of mukhya prāṇa which regulates the respiratory system. A fine observation will at once tell us that the move of prāṇa through the respiratory organ is not disconnected with the other forms of prāṇic activity. Therefore, the teacher urges that prāṇa should be drawn in such a way as to produce a sensible effect upon the apāna and thus to affect gradually the whole prāṇic life moving through the system. Adepts in prāṇāyāma tell us that the gentle and measured move in inhalation and exhalation of prāṇa produces a rhythmic current through the whole prāṇic energy and gradually gives a control over the prāṇic move. This will at once effect a control over our desire and animal being and allow ease and freedom to the soul stricken with swift pulsations

and hankerings of animal life. But this does not give us the consummation, nor can prāṇāyāma rest here.

The Master observes this and therefore conceives the next higher and subtler step in the culture of prāṇāyāma which consists in opening our vital system to the urge of cosmic prāṇa. The little vitality that we possess is not sufficient for the adept, and unless the adept can get hold of the subtle prāṇa he has not the possibility of receiving the privileges and opportunities that accompany the cosmic life and above all the breadth of vision that is dependent on it.

The thread of this connection is to be caught hold of before the cosmic prāṇa can play in us. The yogis conceive this thread to be running through the sympathetic nervous system. In the yogic phraseology it is called suṣumnā. There is nothing in the modern physiology to indicate the place and function of suṣumnā except that in the functioning of the suṣumnā the sympathetic system is put to vigorous and subtle activity. Besides this external indication there is nothing from outside which can point to the prāṇic action in the suṣumnā, though there is the inner experience of breadth of vision and the sudden opening up of consciousness in all directions

which make it the receiving centre of fine oscillations of life and subtle urges of being. The pulse of the infinite life vibrates in the suṣumnā. The yogis believe and actually feel the range of consciousness changing with the prāṇic urge. When the prāṇic urge moves in fine rhythm, consciousness becomes freed from its gross occupation and habitual accommodation and becomes awakened to a fine move of life and delicacies of being.

The move of prāṇa in the suṣumnā is an access to the cosmic consciousness. Prāṇāyāma does not, therefore, mean in Indian mysticism the control of breath to keep up and enjoy a sound physique and a sound nervous system. It is, on the other hand, a method and a discipline, psycho-vital in nature to establish and feel the cosmic life in us. Nothing has been separated from this cosmic life and consciousness, though there has been a bar which keeps out the inflow of cosmic consciousness in us. Mysticism is anxious to open this possibility and prāṇāyāma is a discipline to this end. Indian mysticism is never fond of moving the vital functions for anything but cosmic ends. No doubt, there are accidental effects of such aspirations and consummation, but they come in the way more to

disturb than to consolidate the prāṇic culture. These accidental aberrations are really clogs on the path and should be sedulously avoided. The ideal of prāṇic culture is nothing short of getting the clue to the divine life and the divine urge playing in us, vivifying us, illuminating us and gradually making us fit for the consummation.

When the subtle prāṇa (prāṇa in its sattvic aspect) becomes active, the working of the functional prāṇas becomes momentarily stopped. And this is naturally the case. The functioning of the sattvic prāṇa means a subtler activity on its part which cannot operate unless the lower urges are inhibited. The economy of nature furnishes us with this possibility. The working of the sattvic prāṇa makes the whole move of our being indrawn; and the Gītā, therefore, truly points out that prāṇāyāma in its highest sense is an offering of the prāṇas to the cosmic prāṇa. The functional prāṇas are in their nature restive, connected as they are with the different functions of body and mind. When the higher prāṇa becomes consciously operative in us, the lower ones become inoperative and enjoy the cosmic urge. In fact, momentarily they have suspension from all activities, for in that high consummation

man no longer remains a finite being exhibiting his finite powers; his potential infinitude is realized for the moment, and he feels the unity of being and enjoys the powers of divine life.

Prāṇāyāma has thus a two-fold function, one negative and the other positive. The negative function consists in checking the activities of the little ego and the positive function consists in throwing open the flood gates of infinite life and expression.

EVOLUTION AND PRANAYAMA

We may discuss here the effect of prāṇāyāma on evolution. Nature endows man with a certain potentiality with which he moves. This potentiality is acquired by man in the course of successive evolutions. Evolution in its strict sense is the acquirement of fine powers with the elimination of the grossness of nature. Man is a spiritual entity and evolution in his case means the emergence of the fine spiritual powers and the gradual transformation of the animal being. The animal in man should be eliminated in order that the sleeping powers of the spirit may be fruitfully active. The expression of the spiritual powers in their finest sense on the physical and vital planes requires a fit

medium which may be material but must be fine enough to receive and communicate the in-draught of spiritual powers.

The evolution of natural powers through the natural forces has no doubt endowed us with intellectuality with its fine imaginative and conceptual activity, but this is not enough for the emergence of spiritual life. Intellect is still subservient to natural urges.

No doubt, the higher intellect and the higher mentality are instruments of spirit expressing itself and making itself effective on the physical plane. Intellect generally has not that adaptability and that fitness. It is not unlikely, therefore, that intellectuality is often thought as a bar to spiritual progress. It is because of this limitation of intellect and its subservience to the urges of nature that the mystics are anxious to open in them the faculties of transcendental perception. Intellect may sometimes catch flashes from the higher life, but this also implies a quickening of mental life not found in ordinary man. Intellect, therefore, ministers unto the needs of physical and mental self. It cannot get rid of the limitation of nature and is, therefore, not free from the conceit of agency. It is peculiar to natural evolution that every step of evolution in human

beings is always associated with the emergence of an 'I' consciousness and the effect is that the being in man clings to this 'I' consciousness. The clear emergence of a self conscious 'I', no doubt, makes man the master of himself and endows him with a control over his different functions. His evolution is, to a certain extent, dependent upon himself, if he can make nature's forces active for his benefit.

But this activity brings in with it not only an advantage but also a disadvantage inasmuch as it grafts upon it the sense of an active agent and binds it to the fascination of agency and intoxication of powers. Evolution, therefore, which has so far successfully pushed itself meets a sudden check in this fostering of the conceit of agency which binds man to nature's plane and offers him nature's privileges. Man is not, therefore, still free, for his urges are still confined to animal and vital forces. His evolution is still natural. Spirit is there immanent just as it is everywhere immanent, and it has no effective expression, for the body fit for such an evolution is not yet evolved, a body and a mentality that nature endows us with in its still higher effort of evolution.

The restricted powers with which man is endowed at birth are powers acquired by him in

the course of evolution. Man's activities are confined to these powers, and he enjoys the fruits, well or ill, which come from their proper or improper exercise. In this sense man is subject to his own karma and confined to its fruits. The karmic possibilities are actualized in the course of time. The potentiality which man acquires in the course of evolution is a natural power wrought by natural methods.

Prāṇāyāma helps man to get over his karmic possibilities, for it is so subtle a force that it cannot fail to touch the spirituality of the ego. It starts the cosmic force in man and frees it from natural limitations.

Prāṇāyāma picks up the infinite energy that nature has at her control and makes man really the master of his destiny. The ideal of prāṇāyāma is to get a free control over nature. It is, therefore, not infrequently the case that an adept by prāṇāyāma can cross the ordinary possibilities given unto man and can change the tendencies and impending consequences acquired through successive evolutions. The finite soul through it becomes free from the labyrinth of previous karmic consequences and can get a complete mastery over nature. Prāṇāyāma quickens the evolution not naturally but

spiritually. Spiritual evolution is distinguished from natural in this that here the soul becomes the master and determines and controls the evolution of fine functions and enjoyment of rare possibilities. It is done by him and not for him.

Man has no longer to pay off karmic obligations and debts. In fact we cannot speak of karmic obligation when the cosmic consciousness becomes active in man. Man is, no longer, the agent with conceit but becomes instrumental to divine powers and divine forces. Finite consciousness is replaced by cosmic consciousness and self-effort is replaced by cosmic-effort. The forces of nature are still active and become more forceful, because they can now move with spontaneous ease and are not deterred by limited vision and confined deliberation.

The adept soon acquires an aptitude for clearly understanding the nature and character of the urges, divine and human; and if he is not in any way darkened in his vision, he is always moved by divine urges and not by natural urges. Nature's urges are adapted to individual needs; the divine urges are adapted to cosmic ends. In the course of evolution the soul acquires such a subtle vision that it can never mistake the one for the other. When the soul is moved by cosmic

urges, it is secured from detachment and attraction which characterise the pursuit of individual ends. The cosmic ends are performed by cosmic urges and cosmic urges do not leave behind them attraction or repulsion, attachment or detachment. Attachment and detachment are the indications of animal life consequent upon the conceit of agency. And when karma becomes spontaneous and does not leave behind it the depression or buoyancy of spirits, it is no longer karma in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a cosmic urge.

THE CONCEPTION OF DEVAS

The Gītā indirectly refers to the basic conception of the Mīmāṁsā and the conception of the dēvas. The whole Hindu cosmogony is based upon the conception of the unity of the forces working in and out of us. The cosmic forces can be divided into (1) the forces of nature, (2) the presiding deities of these forces, and (3) the inner forces working in man. The forces of nature are called ādhibhoutic; the inner forces are ādhyātmic; and the intelligent forces which guide the working of nature and the operations of the inner forces in man are called ādhidaivic. The ādhidaivic forces keep up the harmony of nature's

working and establish the unity between the outer and inner nature. The ādhidaivic forces are the conscious guides and agencies through which the cosmic spirit regulates the cosmic forces. This conception has been extended so far that every force of nature is supposed to have a guiding spirit, and none is free from the control of these cosmic agencies.

The deification of the forces of nature is a favourite theme of the early Vedas and has been the basis of the Hindu pantheon. It is philosophically important in this that it suggests that nothing in nature is dead; everything is shining under the changing forces of the spirit. Naturally such a conclusion has a tendency to pass on to pantheism. A conception similar to this is found in modern philosophy, in Fechner's panpsychism.[1]

'The vaster orders of mind go with the vaster orders of body. The entire earth on which we live must have, according to Fechner, its own collective consciousness. So must each sun, moon, planet; so must the whole solar system have its own wider consciousness, on which the

[1] *Vide* Fechner's conception of the earth spirit, sky spirit, etc.

consciousness of our earth plays one part. So has the entire starry system as such its consciousness; and if that starry system be not the sum of all that *is*, materially considered, then that whole system, along with whatever else may be, is the body of that absolutely totalized consciousness of the universe to which men give the name of God. Speculatively, Fechner is thus a monist in his theology; but there is room in his universe for every grade of spiritual being between man and the final all-inclusive God.'[1]

Fechner seems to have the vision of the Vedic sages, that the powers of nature have a corresponding spiritual aspect and these shining forces which are ultimately the cosmic spirit reflected in many centres are the controlling agencies of nature. They have, therefore, an importance for man in his spiritual ascent, and in spiritual life sometimes their direct interference is felt. These forces do not represent the undivided unity of the cosmic consciousness and have natural limitations as working forces. They have avocations according to their capacity and nature which they cannot trans-

[1] *Vide* William James, *Pluralistic Universe*, the Lecture on Fechner.

cend. These avocations generally are the harmonious regulation of the forces of nature and of the correspondence between the inner and the outer forces. They are, in fact, so many centres of unity of the inner and the outer forces, for psychic vision gives the knowledge that the inner forces have a correspondence with the external forces and both are guided and regulated by the shining forces.

These forces may be helpful to the mystic in two ways. Crude mysticism appeals to these forces and allows a subtler gratification in a subtler universe, for they have the control over nature and can offer nature's privileges and opportunities to those whose lives are in complete tune with and in obedience to them. The mystic vision here is still confined and cabined. Such a vision stimulates our being. Such a stimulation can give a thousand-fold satisfaction to the desire-being, but cannot carry us beyond that satisfaction realized here or hereafter. If the correspondence can be directly realized and the forces moved to activity, the desires may reach fruition here; and if this course is continued, the finer satisfaction beyond life is the promise. When the life is cut off from its physical vehicle desires continue to vibrate,

and evolution cannot take a higher and a better course as thought forces still cling to desires, and desires are strong in the animal encasement.

The Gītā has condemned the course of life which entangles us in the mazes of desires, binds us to nature's wheel and leaves us prey to the cycles of birth. The worst consequence of such a life is the complete shutting up of the higher possibilities of devotion and knowledge, as the desire-being is constantly restive and violently agitated by the urges of the lower being. The subtle consciousness generated by concentration upon the shining forces of nature quickens that being of ours which is of nature and is controlled by nature's forces; and such a quickening has the undesirable effect of gradually naturalizing man by opening the avenues of natural satisfaction and confining his attention and interest to it.

The seeker thus attuned becomes gradually irresponsive to the higher currents of life and consciousness, and what is worse, becomes completely addicted to the lower values of immediate satisfaction and is rendered unfit for the higher move of life.[1] The vision here is narrow, and life flows at a low ebb. Such a realization awaits

[1] *Vide* chap. ii. 42, 43, 44.

a discipline of the mental being, and this discipline essentially stirs the elemental powers to advantage but is not enough for the higher and finer realizations, and subtler perceptions.

A question suggests itself: how is it that the move and the satisfaction of desire-being are condemned and the gospel of action is preached in the same breath? If desires confine the soul, how can action be the liberator? And this question is natural in view of the Master's earnest appeal for the Vedic sacrifices.[1]

The Master is conscious of the harmony and the correspondence of the inner and outer forces and of the dependence of the soul upon this correspondence for its physical well-being. In a world of spirits, the finite spirit must feel the sense of community, and their interests are interdependent. If the creative and presiding deities exist, certainly they exercise influence on the corporate cosmic life; and since their being and power are subtler than man's, they are expected to dominate over human fate and destiny in a subtle way. The seer has the vision of the play of the subtle forces and the reciprocity of their services.

[1] *Vide* chap. iii. 10, 11, 12 . . . 16.

Men, nature's spirits and gods are placed in a community, and the right adaptation lies in serving one another, for this is the implied truth of reciprocity, and none can deny it without retribution and punishment. The Gītā beautifully puts the truth :—

'With this sacrifice nourish the devās, the devās will nourish you in return; thus mutually served, the supreme well-being will be preserved.' [1]

The reciprocity of services is apparent in human society ; it becomes apparent also to the mystic in the kingdom of subtler beings. The finite spirit does not alone constitute the corporate life. Men and gods both form the community of free spirits and keep up the cosmic system. The finite spirit stands in relation to and in fellowship with the community of spirits ; and it is naturally expected that it has its duties towards the upkeep of this cosmic corporate life. When it is led by such a lofty motive, his move is not dictated by the urges of his lower nature. This is an indication of an extended vision and right adaptation. In such a fellowship and community of spirits the Gītā reads not only the mutual services on the physical plane, the upkeep of the physical well-being

[1] *Vide* chap. iii. 11.

and the maintenance of the physical order, but also perceives the moral and spiritual meaning of the cosmic organization.[1] The Gītā has the finer vision that the cosmic order is not only a physical order meeting the demands of the physical needs, but also a realm of spiritual ends. It preaches the conception in an eloquent strain. It inculcates the imperativeness of our performing reciprocal services. The karmic urge in the Gītā, rightly understood, is not an urge for the satisfaction of the animal and vital needs. It is not an urge for the realization of a subtler pleasure here or hereafter, as it is conceived in the sacrificial mysticism of Pūrva Mīmāṁsa. The Gītā is apparently anxious to establish the righteousness of spiritual order in which men and gods are workers. The order which has its origin from the infinite is maintained by the infinite and kept in it.[2] 'Know thou that from the Vedas action groweth and the Vedas from the Imperishable cometh. Hence the all-permeating Brahman is ever present in the sacrifice.'[3] In the light of this vision karma assumes a different phase with a new meaning.

[1] *Vide* chap. iii, ślokas 22, 23, 24 ; chap. iv, śloka, 24.
[2] *Vide* chap. iii, śloka 15.
[3] *Vide* Besant's translation.

It is no longer an urge for the satisfaction of some desires. It is, on the other hand, an urge springing from the spiritual height of working for cosmic ends. He stands condemned who does not see the sacredness of the cosmic integration and the law of reciprocity which controls it; sinner is he, confined is he to the sense-life.

Karma has a wider meaning than is generally ascribed to it. Karma here indicates the divine urge and when our being is moved by it we are no longer fastened to the evil effects of karma.[1] To be in tune with such a force is an indication of a higher evolution of our being and consciousness. Such adaptation brings more and more the inflow of divine life. When such an end is in sight we are no longer guided by sordid desires, and the elemental forces of nature cease to have any effect upon us. This consummation is to be devoutly wished for and is possible only when some progress has been achieved, and the being has become subtle and fine enough to catch and receive the inflow of divine life that saturates the whole existence with beneficent powers.

[1] *Vide* Madhusudhan's and Svāmi's *Commentary* on Sl. 15 (chap. iii.)

Karma in its ordinary sense can only push the terrestrial evolution but cannot give us the finer being and help the finer evolution ; but, when the finer being evolves, karma is no longer a natural force. It is, then, a quickening force of the soul.

When the spiritual force becomes active in us it takes the direction of creating and preserving the spiritual values and is anxious to keep up the righteous and spiritual order. The Master is eloquent about this. In the light of this vision the Master, instead of assuming a negative attitude towards life and expression, is positively eloquent about the cosmic ends that life pursues in the course of higher fulfilment. The cosmic order is not a natural order ;[1] it is a spiritual order ; it conserves spiritual values. Spiritual life aims at establishing these values, for the darkening forces are at work to stiffen spiritual life and spiritual order unto death. The higher we rise in the scale of spiritual evolution, the more we become conscious of the imperativeness of this demand and of the working of the higher forces to these ends. When our forces work in this direction they have the inner illumination of the higher adaptation and cosmic fellowship.

[1] *Vide* chap. iii. 16, 23.

The ideal of spiritual life is to forget the life of egoistic seeking and to live the life of fellowship with cosmic powers and gradually to establish the instrumentality of our being for higher divine ends. The reciprocity of services between man and gods is still a confined outlook, which is overcome when the urge of life is subtle enough to understand a far-reaching unity and community of spirits in the Absolute. The order will fall into ruin, if it is not kept up by the infinite. The rigour of duty is now displaced by the love of service. Men, angels and gods become conscious of the holiness of the order and the righteousness of the purpose. The least individuality and separateness which could divide the composing members of the unity is for ever eliminated. The spiritual life is nothing if it is not a life of harmony; and the more the spirit is indrawn, the more the being becomes enlivened. This life of cosmic rhythm is a life of fine delight.

Such a life of divine adaptation and cosmic ends is not possible in lower mentality. It presupposes the higher evolution and the opening of the super-mind and intuitive intelligence. If the urges of the lower nature are guided and controlled by the law of lower being, life has no chance of attaining this fine evolution, and,

therefore, to this end the lower urges must be kept under control and gradually brought under the higher law of duty. For this Gītā has inculcated the doctrine of karma in its ethical aspect which has different stages of expression.

CULTURE OF WILL

The Gītā lays stress upon the culture of will. The gospel is nothing, if it is not a serious call to a life of animated activity in faith and hope. The traditional bent has been to deny the urges of will and to welcome a will-less bliss. The Gītā expressly breaks with this tradition and denounces in no uncertain terms the life of inactivity and indecisiveness. And, naturally so, since the gospel which lays down a culture for man in relation to his environment can hardly forsake, far less deny life and its adaptation. The gospel sees the importance of will in its gross and fine nature in the concrete life, and if a discipline for the will in the composite culture is not laid down, the culture falls short of its comprehensiveness. Mystic discipline is essentially the heightening of self-consciousness, and it must take note of all forms of urges that go to form the unity of self-conscious life.

Will is an important function of the mental being. It has different expressions in the higher and in the lower mind. In the lower mind it is almost blind; in the higher it is self-conscious activity directed by a vision and an end. The culture of will, therefore, includes within its scope the regulation of these urges. And we have already indicated in our discourse on prāṇāyāma the obstacles put in the way of spiritual realization by the urges of our lower being. The lower being is to be completely transformed to make the spiritual life a fact and realization. The Gītā is eloquent about the evil effects of the lower urges of our nature inasmuch as they are dark forces and confine the oscillation of life to mis-directed activity and animal ends. The stir of will is here essentially rājasic and cannot feel the sattvic currents of higher mentality. The desire-being is excited by the urges of lower satisfactions, and so long as the desire-being does not receive the higher urges of intellectual and spiritual life, it has a natural tendency to continue its activity on the lower planes of nature; and naturally, therefore, it checks the higher and finer evolution.

The emergence of the higher will in the course of evolution is possible when our being is quickened by deeper perceptions and subtler

forces and when we attain the higher mentality in clear self-consciousness. This becomes possible when life gradually concentrates on the formation of a self-conscious unity and adaptation is brought under the complete control of self. Evolution in man has reached the level of self-consciousness. Even here the forces are not well adjusted and finely regulated so as to keep up the balance and equilibrium. There are occasional lapses when the lower being and the dark forces become supreme. Man still continues to be under a conflict between the higher and the lower urges of life, and evolution looks forward to a state where the lower urges must ultimately yield to the higher ones.

Here lies the importance of the culture of will. This culture has two important stages: (1) the culture of the finite will, and (2) the emergence of the cosmic will in the finite will. The first one is the discipline; the second one is the desirable consummation.

The discipline of will in its initiation is essentially a discipline of will by reason. Will has a natural tendency to satisfy the emotional being in man and naturally gravitates towards the realization of pleasures of the lower being. The culture of will is essentially directed towards the

raising of will from its intimate association with the pleasure-self to a finer move and expression. Arjuna was stricken with morbid apprehensions natural to intellectual shortsightedness and could not, therefore, rise to cosmic vision natural to the higher self. This separation of will from the emotional being is a necessity, and this is done in different stages by gradual refinement. This separation of will from personal interests is established by cultivating an impersonal attitude in the performance of duty. The Gītā has foreseen Kant in his conception of duty and has like him drawn a distinction between inclinations and duty. Inclinations are clingings of natural self, and unless they can be transcended, will functions as the tendency of natural self and moves in desire-being. The greatest demand of mystic consciousness is to free itself from the oscillations of desires. Unless the vibrative influences of desire are got over, the acquisition of spiritual life is a dream. To get rid of the urges of desire, it is necessary to take higher perspectives of reason and not to yield to an inclination unless it has the sanction of reason. The dictate of reason proceeds from the higher mental-being and transforms the desire-being. The Gītā is eloquent about the life of action; but

is equally eloquent about leaving all desires aside. It inculcates ceaseless action, and at the same time it appeals to leave aside the fruits of action. When action proceeds from desires, we become restive about their fruition. But when our active life is in tune with the law of expression of higher life, it becomes an expression of the higher self, and it is no longer actuated by desires. If it has any purpose, it is cosmic; but before such cosmic purpose can be attained and cosmic life can be lived, the mind requires a complete detachment from the urges of the lower self. To this end an attitude of complete indifference to the fruition of our actions is to be cultivated, and the law of duty in its categorical rigorism has to be established. This will have the immediate effect of our gradually becoming indifferent to and freeing ourselves from the desire self.

In the terminology of the Gītā, before the full fruition of the sāttvic impluse can be attained, it is necessary that the rājasic impluse of karma binding us to desire should be got over. A stage follows, where actions, no longer prompted by desires, become merely imperfect expressions of the higher self. It is not possible in this stage to understand them as expressions. And for the moment it appears that ethical life has no higher

urge and that the desires are put under the rigorism of duty. But this rigorism is soon transcended where the ethical life has its expression in far-reaching ends.

The Gītā has not denied an expression of active life in ethical ends and has thus synthesized the conception of duty with the conception of end. What it fights against is that in ethical life the individual should have no good of his own, or if he desires to have any good this can only be the cosmic good.

A finer conception of duty lies in the eccentric adjustment of our motives, but this eccentric adjustment is not to be identified with the Western altruistic conception of duty. Western altruism is based upon external sanctions and does not proceed from the deeper perception of the unity of being and the unity of the cosmic self. When the Master urges the disciple to shake off timidity and to take to action by appealing to his own dharma, he is appealing to his higher sense and deeper conviction as a member of a cosmic society. The natural inclination has to be replaced by the higher urge of duty which gives one an occasion to prove one's self a fit receptacle of the finer urge moving the universe and human society to a better end. The Indian

conception of dharma is a deeper and a subtler conception than the Western conception of duty. Dharma is indicative of the law that establishes and regulates human society. The distinction of the higher and the lower duties is not valid. Men have their avocations according to their adaptations. These avocations are for the regulation of an order and for materializing a cosmic purpose in human society. It is not possible for the ambitious seeker to cross his own dharma and assimilate the dharma of a higher order,[1] because by adaptation and evolution he has already in him a mentality which fits him for definite ends and definite services, and unless he has served the purpose and has thus quickened his moral evolution, it is not possible for him to appreciate and understand the finer evolution of the higher stages to fit himself for the higher vocations of life. The Master is, therefore, anxious to keep up the equilibrium of society by inculcating the imperativeness of the duties lying nearest at hand. In this adaptation according to dharma the immediate achievement is not a question or a problem, for dharma does not proceed from egoistic consciousness. It is a law that controls the

[1] *Vide* chap. ii. 26.

evolution and adjusts the forces according to their magnitude and intensiveness of service. The achievement, which dharma promises, is the purification of functions which gradually but surely allow a greater expansion of being and consciousness and facilitate more subtle and complex evolution. Dharma regulates the cosmic order and the fulfilment of it cannot fail to produce a desirable result, either for individual or for society. But the individual must shake off his nervousness before he can truly appreciate and perceive the cosmic adaptation by cosmic laws which he can neither disturb nor break without paying the high penalty, retardation of progress and unfoldment. In this sense dharma is imperative not as a human make-shift nor as a matter of individual choice; its power and influence make it quite clear that a single step onward is not possible by denying one's dharma. Rightly understood dharma is the cosmic urge at the root of evolution. Life has a law of evolution, a law which is true of the individual as well as of the race. And at times the forces working in human society have to be adjusted, new values have to be established. Unless the lower forces are regulated according to the order and harmony of the higher forces, the ordered life of society

becomes impossible and the setting of higher values becomes a dream. And dharma seeks to push the evolution onward by setting free the bright forces and making them active. The social convulsions prove sometimes too much for even the courageous self, and dharma stands every chance of suffering unless illumination dawns and keeps the order of righteous evolution in its straight path. Illumination and activity co-operate to help the evolution onward; and unless will has illumination, it cannot serve dharma and quicken evolution. The right appraisement of the values of the evolutionary forces and their concentration to a definite end are necessary to promote the social evolution, and this appreciation requires fine intelligence, and the adjustment, ready will. The will must be completely overshadowed and be guided by the law of dharma. Thus it ultimately realizes itself as a cosmic force. When, therefore, the master is urging the disciple to observe his dharma, he is only putting before him the law of the higher life which can help his evolution to a finer being and can save him from the dark forces restricting and confining evolution to the physical plane.

But the vision of dharma cannot be complete and its truer nature cannot be realized unless

our intelligence enables us to see the righteousness of the cosmic order. The moral sense may perceive the subtle work of dharma, and rightly regulated, it cannot fail to find that evolution is the working of spirit. Dharma ultimately is fulfilled in faith and devotion. The ethical life becomes the dedicated life. In this dedication a finer life is felt as running through the evolution, and the law that had so long the appearance of an external law guiding the universe is now felt to be its inner guiding force. Will no longer is in opposition to an external law. It gradually changes rational obedience into willing surrender and loving devotion, for it begins to feel the unity of life and consciousness that moves the evolution. In the life of devotion, therefore, the Gītā finds the urge of devotion finer than the urge of dharma. Devotion has not the compulsion of dharma, and the compelling force of dharma gives way to the ease and spontaneity of loving devotion. Love smooths life's adaptation and never falters, for it has no doubting and questioning spirit. The complete surrender establishes an intimacy with the cosmic life, and the faculties of ordinary adaptation are stimulated to unfailing activity which characterizes the life of vision and faith. The Gītā is

eloquent about the rest and quiet of the soul when it has been fine enough to get hold of its inner movement in faith and love. If the finite spirit possesses any faculties that can apprehend the infinite, surely they are faith and love. Faith secures the inner being from the restlessness of spirit. Faith gives the intuitive vision. The adaptation, according to dharma, suffers from a short-coming. It cannot establish the even flow of spiritual life in us. Perceiving this short-coming and deficiency in the concept of dharma, the Master passes on to the next stage of the finer culture of will with a finer vision. This culture is the surrender of will. The complete emergence of the infinite life in us presupposes the full self-abnegation which prepares the ground for such a reception. The law of dharma, no doubt, implies the divine providence of the world, but so long as the divine providence is not fully and intimately realized, the conception of dharma has not its full fruition. The will is here controlled by law and has not a loving surrender. The Gītā does not merely insist upon the surrender of the human will in devotion but insists upon letting it out in all forms of activity, inward and outward, viewing as it does every move of life as a pulsation of the cosmic will. Devotion establishes

complete unity between the finite and the infinite, and as such the finite being and will are stirred no longer by the oscillations of finite life, but by the infinite urge. In this the culture of will follows devotion in the finest sense of the term and proceeds to establish a harmony of wills for cosmic end or purpose. This concentration of will and its final emergence as a stream of the divine flow transform the will from its natural and habitual adaptation to the finer means of an effective expression of the divine life. Will in this stage perceives no conflict. Its finest essence has been drawn out in this high stage of evolution, where seeing is willing. The finite will thus merged in the divine will is not restricted in its freedom. It moves with the spontaneity of divine life. The spiritual life aims at this freedom. It moves with an urge that can control all other urges. Mysticism is nothing, if it is not a great venture to assert the mastery of the soul over the functions of body and mind. To this end the culture and the merging of will is a great help, for will must be raised from its yielding to the promptings of the lower self to the height of its submission to the divine, and this submission means the complete change of our being. It is spiritually re-born. This is the new birth of the will in the sunshine

of spiritual life. It now becomes ceaselessly active in the moulding of our organic, vital and mental beings to make them fit media of spiritual expression. The will becomes unfailingly effective by its will-lessness. It dies a natural death to live a higher life.

But such a will is careful not to inhibit or destroy the lower forces, for its end is to make effective the divine will; and as such it cannot completely dissociate itself from the medium of physical expression. On the other hand, the urges being now under the control of a higher will, naturally change their meaning, outlook and adaptation. Everything is seen in a new light, and the apparent discord of life passes into harmony of a spiritual life. Nothing in nature now seems to be ill-ordained, and nothing purposeless. In fact, nothing appears irrational, since every urge is ultimately the divine urge in its varied expression. These forces then in their rejuvenated life find a place in the divine fecundity and keep up and realize the divine purpose in the order of expression.

Reciprocal Relations between Pranic and Will Cultures

The culture of will and the discipline of prāṇa appear different in the beginning, but they merge

into one another in the end. Prāṇāyāma moves the cosmic prāṇa, vāsanāyāma (will-culture) moves the cosmic will. Both of them quiet down the lower urges and draw out the finer powers.

In the cosmic life prāṇa is the vehicle of expression of the cosmic will; and, in fact, will and prāṇa are the inner and the outer expression of the same reality. There is no distinction between them. The control of the one means the control of the other. Simply by surrendering the will we can successfully check and eliminate the lower vibrative urge of prāṇa. The culture of will also is influenced by the quieting down of the prāṇic urge.

Still a complete mystical discipline would require a discipline of both, inasmuch as the culture of will cannot proceed further and have its full fruition unless the vital body is fit to receive and retain the urges of cosmic prāṇa. This is the reason why the Gītā urges both the forms of cultures, and we have already noticed that the true end of prāṇāyāma is to have the animal body completely under the control of the vital body which in its turn is to be constantly purified by the infusion of the subtler prāṇa. A fit mind always lives in a fit body. However subtle the mental powers may be, they cannot

have full effective expression if the system is not attuned. The culture of will naturally presupposes the culture of prāṇa, and in the case of the fit both may run concurrently because the one has an invariable effect on the other. In the adept both of them are operative, the prāṇa vibrates with the cosmic life, the will moves on with the cosmic force. When such a consummation is reached, no difficulty is experienced in the easy flow of prāṇa and in the spontaneous activity of will.

The Path of Devotion

The Gītā in its varied form of culture has not neglected devotion as a method of self-discipline. We have already touched upon devotion. A distinction should be made between emotion and devotion. Religious life is often identified with emotional expressions which follow upon love-ecstacy and love-life and naturally a life of sentiment mistakenly passes for religion. This is especially the case with devotional mysticism. The devotional mystics naturally have emotional outbursts, and they exhibit oscillations in the mental and physical being. Modern psychologists draw a distinction between two forms of

ecstasy. 'The one is characterised by wild excitement, loss of self-control and temporary madness. It is a sort of religious intoxication, indulged in largely for its delightful effects. This usually originates in dancing and other physical manifestations. The other is intense, but quiet and calm; it is usually spontaneous in origin, or else comes through mental rather than physical causes.'[1] Sentimentalism makes the being more restive than calm as it is often accompanied by maddening attractions and swayed by unceasing intoxication of spiritual life. Generally devotional mysticism is confounded with emotionalism and sentimentalism.

But such is not the conclusion of the Gītā. The Gītā is careful to draw a distinction between devotion and emotion. Emotion is an urge of animal being touched by a mental feeling. Devotion belongs to higher mentality and rare is the occasion when its influence is carried to the lower mentality. It is convenient here to distinguish between a higher and a lower self. The higher self is under the direct influence of the divine life and it alone can penetrate into the secrets of the

[1] *Vide* Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, p. 45, quoted in the *Philosophy of Plotinus* by Dean Inge.

finer life. When the soul is chastened and purified, the higher urges can play in it without the faintest influence upon lower being. The excitement in it in mystic urges can only be due to the grossness of the soul. A life of devotion is not possible unless the soul has been successful in reading a difference between spirituality and sentimentality. Even the pure and fine touches of human sentiment have a tendency to produce a confused mentality and of interpreting a fine sentiment as devotion. Sentiments have their play in the higher mental life and have generally a calming influence on the mind. Still the sentiment of devotion is to be distinguished from devotion as such. Sentiment is the mood which the soul enjoys, but this enjoyment is more human and does not belong to the spiritual life. In fact, devotion may bring in many shades of feeling and cultivate many permanent tendencies in the mind, but if the soul cannot remain free from these, it has the sure tendency to be checked in the course of spiritual fulfilment. The spiritual life requires that the soul should be free from all its effects, however noble, however fine they may be, for the ultimate idea is to live the divine life and to gradually forsake all the clingings of the finite soul. The life of

freedom which is the promise of spirituality can only be attained, when the soul is a complete witness to every form of fruition that comes in the course of spirituality. Whatever may be the form of devotion in initiation, it gradually loses its former hold in its fulfilment; and naturally, the life of devotion in its start is often mixed with other forms of feelings, and generally its fineness and purity cannot be understood, far less appreciated in the beginning. But devotion in its true colour comes in when the soul has the needed ascent in the form of Śradhā. Śradhā is an attitude of consciousness which gives rest to the doubting mind and illumination to the yearning soul. When the restless spirit of the questioning soul has been displaced by the surety and the quiet of faith—faith not in the sense of an ignorant pursuit but a deep conviction following from the purity and transparence of the soul—it has its new birth in devotional spirituality. The soul is not born in utter nakedness and is carried by its natural intuition into the life of devotion. Intellect is the discerning faculty, faith the guiding faculty. It proceeds from a deeper being than intellect. The Master is eloquent about the services of faith. 'By devotion he knoweth me in essence, who and what I am; having thus known me in essence he

forthwith entereth into the Supreme.'[1] This undivided devotion is not possible, if the soul has the least thought about itself, for devotion presupposes non-attachment from every occupation of life. The move of life in devotion is really the move of infinite life, and it cannot be enjoyed in its fineness if the adept does not keep the attitude of detachment even in the life of devotion. This detachment helps to embrace the infinite life and to enjoy it in its transcendent purity. The least touch of self and the consciousness of its clingings are a bar to spiritual fulfilment. No doubt, the life of devotion has its attendant delight, but this is the delight of the soul and does not touch and overwhelm the emotional being. And, therefore, in devotional life the soul is not overcome by feeling and can keep self-consciousness so fresh that it finds no difficulty in adapting itself to a complex situation. The Gītā has never identified devotion with the exuberance of any particular attitude of consciousness. It is, on the other hand, a state in which the soul can receive the urges of the infinite life. In order to make the soul the fit recipient of the perennial source of life, it is an

[1] *Vide* Besant's translation.

imperative necessity that the soul should never lose its concentration in infinite life and be always in possession of its luminous self-consciousness. The common tendency in such a height of consciousness is to pass into a state of ecstacy or absorption which Christian mysticism designates as the orison of the soul. When the soul crosses the bounds of the divided consciousness, it is overweighed by the depth of infinite life. George Russell (A.E.) hints at this when he says 'there is still in Lir an immense deep of being, an emotional life, too vast, too spiritual, too remote to speak of, for the words we use to-day cannot tell its story.' And 'Lir is an infinite being, neither spirit, nor energy, nor substance, but rather the spiritual form of these, in which, all the divine powers raised above themselves exist in a mystic union or trance.'[1] Such a state is highly delightful, because of the occasional silence of the dance of life. It has the enjoyment of a deep quiet and a peaceful repose. Such an experience becomes highly delightful also by a contrast. It enjoys the peace of ecstacy and is freed from the anguish of the divided consciousness.

[1] *Vide* A. E.'s *Candle of Vision, Celtic Cosmogony*, p. 155.

But in the depth of this unitive consciousness and in the intensity of fellowship the soul loses itself and cannot sustain and continue that spirit of detachment which is necessary to carry it still higher. The urge of union is, no doubt, a very high one, but it is not the only urge. The enjoyment of the spiritual delight produces relaxation in detachment. It binds the soul to the same perspective of spiritual life and obstructs the fuller disclosure of its possibilities. It is, therefore, a positive bar to the self-conscious reception of the divine life in its full and varied expression. The ideal of the mystic life of the Gītā is, therefore, to continue clear self-consciousness in every form of spiritual experience and not to be overwhelmed by the intensity of any one of them. However high and sublime may be the infusion of spiritual life the Gītā wants to retain self-consciousness up to the end and to embrace every form of the urge of divine life in clear self-consciousness. The effect of this self-conscious adaptation even in this height of spiritual fulfilment is that the self is not lost from its hold, and it can adapt itself to any situation with full consciousness of its complete unity with the infinite life. The Gītā enjoins self-possession even in devotion, otherwise the

synthetic discipline of the Gītā becomes an impossibility.

But the life of devotion has its difference from the culture of will. Devotion immediately instals us in the heart of the infinite life. Will is essential to an effective expression, and in surrendering our will we make it more effective and instrumental to the divine will. Devotion fixes our being in the infinite, for it is ultimately an assimilation of the infinite in the finite life.[1] The urge in devotion is an urge to the centre of our being. It is centric. The cosmic urge has an inward being and outward expression. In its inner being it is an urge towards the infinite. And this urge carries the finite soul to it. In its outward expression it sends forth a current to regulate the cosmic life.

In order that the soul may catch the influence of the centric urge, it is necessary that the finite soul should look up to receive the ever-flowing divine influence. Devotional consciousness is anxious to catch this urge in its initiation, and for this the Gītā urges a complete purging out of other influences from the soul. This purging is

[1] Vide *Theologica Germanica*, p. 159:
Love so maketh a man one with God, that he can never more be separated from Him.

a necessary factor in devotional life. It cleanses the soul.[1] It has the great effect of making the soul the recipient of the urge, for unless the soul is emptied it cannot be filled. The emergence of a new life requires the death of the old. When, therefore, there is intense yearning of the soul for the higher illumination, the yearning goes a great way to establish the attitude which is helpful to devotional life. The constant look-up to the infinite life is itself a great power inasmuch as it fixes the soul to the infinite and neglects all forms of securities in life. The Master calls upon the disciple to ignore all other forms of discipline and adaptations and have a constant look up to him. He promises emancipation from the cycles of births and deaths. This 'look-up' carries with it the complete separation of the soul from its lower and higher urges. The lower ones are constant impediments to spiritual life. And the higher ones may infuse greater life and higher enthusiasm, still they may not give us the divine life. The divine life is possible when the soul has the direct and the immediate reception of the

[1] Vide *The Supersensual Life*, p. 50:

I conceive indeed well enough that my spirit ought to be free from the contagion of matter and wholly empty, that it may admit into it the spirit of God.

urge of infinite life. Unless our being is under the direct control of this urge, it is not possible for it to enjoy the divine felicity; although it may be possible for it to enjoy the higher privileges offered by nature.

Śaraṇāpatti gives the direct surrender and fits us for receiving the inmost expression of the divine life. It establishes more than anything else the true fellowship.

Before the mental being has the rest and strength of surrender, it is subject to natural urges; for it has not the power to get over and control them. Śaraṇāpatti (by surrendering the mental being completely) delivers the soul from them and enables it to get a mastery of the natural urges. Surrender gives the calm.[1] The cosmic urges of nature are too powerful for the common man. They are powerless to the adept, because their value diminishes when the soul receives the divine urge. The ends set values upon the urges; but with the inner illumination

[1] *Vide* James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 205: Whoever not only says but feels 'God's will be done' marks against every weakness, and the whole historic array of martyrs, missionaries and religious reformers is there to prove the tranquil-mindedness under naturally agitating and distressing circumstances, which self-surrender brings.

which follows surrender the natural urges lose their meanings. The illuminated vision cannot put the same premium upon them which the unilluminated soul does. But this should not mean that śaraṇāpatti brings in inaction and the quiet of a meditative life. Concentration in the divine is, no doubt, its soul, but this concentration makes the soul open to the divine urges, and, if necessary, it can move on with the impulsion of divine life. The great fruitfulness of śaraṇāpatti lies in rearing up the divine nature of the soul and its transcendence over the urges of a divided life.

The soul realizes its divinity; the restrictions of human life pass off. The elasticity of divine life is ushered in. The whole fabric of being is surcharged with the intensity of divine light and being, and the finer the being, the longer it can hold the infusion. The least grossness and selfishness brings in conflict and ultimately breaks the receptacle. Śaraṇāpatti has this virtue that it puts the whole being under the divine influence. It puts the seeking soul in a particular attitude which fits it for Grace; and 'the sweet and blissful nature of God pours down from the bosom of his constant immutability the salutary rays of his light into our

understanding.'[1] It is the great secret of drawing down the power of God upon the soul and infusing divine purity and strength into it. Boehme expresses the same truth when he says, 'this spirit will not enter, but where the will entereth into nothing, and resigneth itself in the Nakedness of Faith.'[2]

The culture in śaraṇāpatti ultimately ends in fitting the adept with a fine being. It is also a great purifying agency. Indeed, a new being has its birth.

The fight between nature and spirit ceases when nature is brought completely under the control of spirit, and the natural adaptations gradually give way to the new mode of life. This transformation is not a difficult task; so complete and overpowering is the influence of spirit that it finds no difficulty in infusing its power and changing nature according to its own purpose. It does not take long to secure a being that can keep harmony with the divine life, for the divine urge is the surest moulding power and it moulds the body to make it a fit vehicle of the soul awakened into super-consciousness. This adaptation becomes

[1] Heir, Eccl. ii. 3; quotation in the *Mystical State, Its Nature and Phases* by Auguste Sandream.
[2] *Vide The Supersensual Life*, p. 50.

spontaneous, for the spirit is the great controlling and formative principle. Every urge of divine life is unfailingly effective in eliminating the grossness of the soul and in beautifying and rejuvenating the organism; and the finer the body and the mind, the more consciously active become the urges.

The inward bent of being in surrender is a potent force. As a spiritual discipline it is complete in itself and does not require cultures previously mentioned. It stirs the higher being, calms the lower urges and gradually changes the whole adaptation of life. It quiets down the restive being. It moves the cosmic prāṇa to activity. Before the descent of Mercy can be fully effective in giving its complete protection and in awarding its full spiritual possibilities, this inward bent works as a sure method of purification. It washes out the downward tendencies of the soul and their restricting influence and allows an easy and spontaneous inflow of life. The more complete the surrender, the more visibly active becomes the cosmic prāṇa in the seeker; for without the prāṇic flow the physical and the vital being cannot be transformed and made fit to receive divine urges in uninterrupted succession. Self-conscious surrender gives an

easy control over prāṇa, makes it quiet and unruffled. The prāṇic culture is difficult inasmuch as prāṇa is a subtle force and its activity cannot without risk be checked and controlled. But the listlessness of śaraṇāpatti silences the mental being and calms the prāṇic vibration, and if it is continued for sometime with its quickening spiritual influence, the cosmic prāṇa becomes vibrative. And the adept feels the expansive life of prāṇa and with it greater vitality. The sense of 'littleness' and 'confinement' of the man is displaced by the sense of freedom and magnitude of being. The prāṇic culture is a positive help and accessory to the calmness of being so essential to the spiritual expression, but it is not an absolute necessity, for its usefulness and purpose are served by the finer discipline of śaraṇāpatti. In spiritual life, the finer discipline has a greater value, for the urge of the finer life is greatly effective in moulding the grosser life in its own way.

The purification of the gross nature helps the fine life to be active in the gross being, but this purification is only external and cannot help unless the discipline of the inner being is simultaneously started. How much energy is lost when this simple truth is not perceived in life! Man is more spirit than body, and the discipline

which begins with the spirit immediately is greater and more effective in value than the one which lays emphasis upon the discipline of the gross nature. Kṛṣṇa, in laying stress upon the inward and direct method in preference to the other forms of discipline, has shown the easiest and the surest method of receiving life and light. If concentration within self gives the knowledge of the finite ego, Śaraṇāpatti gives the knowledge of the cosmic consciousness and makes its will and purpose active in us.

The negative or indirect services of Śaraṇāpatti in spiritual life are high inasmuch as they establish a sāttvic harmony between the different urges of being by the elimination of the inertia of tamas and by the quieting down of the vibrations of rajas. The full potency of śaraṇāpatti is still not drawn out, and as a negative method its value, however high, does not appear in its full being and strength. The equilibrium and richness of life in sattva is not the spiritual life in perfection, and often a static calm in mental being passes for spiritual fullness. The chief value of śaraṇāpatti lies in securing the soul from such equilibrium and richness of life, for they are still perfections in the natural urges of sattva. The soul may attain a luminosity,

but this can be only the luminosity of sattva and the powers that are still active are the powers of the finer forces of nature in us. These are indeed high perfections. But they are not spiritual perfections, for the refinement of the natural being brings with it natural powers, but cannot confer divine possibilities. Śaraṇāpatti is an access to our divine nature, and as such the penetration is deep into the recess of being. The accumulation of powers and the play of fine forces must not be mistaken for the divine being, not that the divine being is not dynamic, but that in the display and exhibition of powers the divine life has no clinging to self and moves on to cosmic ends. The luminosity of sattva cannot be fully established unless the mental being is completely spiritualized with the infusion of the divine life. Without this infusion the sattvic luminosity gets darkened by the rājasic impelling and the tāmasic clouding. The whole mental being needs to be completely subordinated to the divine influence in order that it can be freed from the conquest of the natural urges. The divine life cannot transmit itself through mental being unless it finds the mental cover of the soul sufficiently fit. And to be effective in our life and adaptation, the divine influence should attune the whole system

and filtrate through the whole being, mental and physical. The desire for the ideal is attained when the being of the adept becomes completely luminous under divine influence and moves by it in its creative, conservative and destructive activities. But this effectiveness in adaptation is not the only consequence which awaits such a consummation; the luminosity extends far beyond and opens the eternal possibilities of the divine life which transcends the limited intelligence in the life of concentration.

The Master promises immortality, the crossing of the ocean of death (mrityusaṁsārasāgara) as the sure consequence of surrender. Surrender does not only extend the range of penetration into the finer realms of nature and endow the resigned self with the finer possibilities which are still possibilities of a restricted being, but it also exhibits its essence in the boundless life of spirit. This dropping of the restriction allows it the delight of an expansive being and fellowship in the divine, which is true immortality; and unless the soul can be freed from the attractions of fine urges in sāttvic impulsion of the mental-vital nature, it cannot rise to true spirituality. With the attainment of true spirituality, the vital-mental force remains active on

the physical plane and becomes more effective, inasmuch as it works no longer with a blind or semi-blind impulsion of its native being, but as the medium of spiritual expression on the physical plane. The acquired or inherited impulsions become thoroughly changed in the divine light and they are no longer obstructions to the enlightened soul.

CENTRALIZATION (CONTEMPLATION)

The psychometric centralization finds mention in the Gītā. It has expanded the art and shown its usefulness.[1] Concentration is to be distinguished from centralization. Concentration is a mental attitude, but it may be spiritually applied. For the higher we soar, the more beneficial is the concentration.[2] Centralization is a deeper and diviner process and belongs to the interior, mystical modes of the soul.[3] Centralization is necessary inasmuch as the soul is often drawn out to external activity, and this process fixes the soul to itself. Two modes are distinguished: (1) the one gives insight into the soul[4], and (2) the other into the divine.[5]

[1] *Vide* chap. vi. *vv.* 10–18.
[2] *Vide* J. C. F. Grunsine's *Psychometry*, p. 38.
[3] Vide *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[4] Vide, chap. vi. 25, 26.
[5] Vide *Ibid.*, 30, 31.

Consecration as implied in śaraṇāpatti is to be distinguished from centralization. Consecration implies a feeling of surrender, which is not evident in centralization. Centralization is self-imposed and is not quickened by any influence from the divine. Consecration quickens the soul and gives an elasticity of being which is not much evident in centralization. The effort in centralization is replaced by an ease and facility in consecration.

Consecration touches feeling and relational consciousness which centralization does not denote. Both signify an inward urge, but consecration lends to it a colour and a meaning which centralization lacks. The one lacks in feeling, the other is exuberant in it. The one gives a quiet absorption; the other a rejuvenated being.

Transcendent Illumination

The finest discipline is the culture of transcendent illumination. The cosmic urge of will and love suffers a limitation, because this urge still belongs to the life of concentration. The cosmic harmony is ceaselessly active in making the cosmic life a source of unceasing attraction in love and

beauty. If will establishes harmony, love works at evolving the still finer consciousness of sweetness and grace. Divine power and divine love are intimately associated; power establishes the harmony for the expression of the deeper consciousness of love and beauty. Power is effective as the force of order and re-arrangement in nature and society, love as a force of redemption and a source of higher gratification in divine beauty and delight. It is the great indrawn force for the finite soul. Love reveals the inmost expression of the divine being and vibrates the chord of beauty and sweetness and makes the righteous order appear as also the absorbingly beautiful. In the former, God is revealed as power, in the latter as delight. Self-consciousness is evenly maintained in both, for the finer is the expression in self-consciousness the better is the revelation of divine life. Righteousness and beauty are the finest expressions of divine life in concentration.

The inward urge still continues to cross the life of concentration and to get to the life of transcendence. Before such transcendence is possible, the spirit attains the vision of itself immanent in the order of expression, not as the cosmic urge of will or love, but as the finest essence underlying the

order. With such a vision, the self-conscious pursuit attains the higher and finer stage of wisdom, which surmounts the life of will and love and passes off into the life of completeness and fullness of being. Love and will are in touch with the immanent order in its expression, for they are forces that can be effective there alone. They cannot proceed further. Possibly they can have no use where consciousness and being transcend expression and pass into the quiet of the indeterminate. The finer move of intuition can feel the pulse there, only to lose itself ultimately in the Nirvāṇic calm (Brahmanirvāṇa). In this height of existence the urges of cosmic life are hushed into silence, and the self is closeted with the self. Such a consummation is possible when the self-consciousness is consistently pursued to the end, and the urges of will and love cannot bind the soul, for the soul is kept ever awakened, so to speak, and is not entangled in the delight of expression. Steiner has a similar thought when he says, 'he can henceforth confront, devoid of feeling, a fact which, before his training, would have filled him with flowing love or bitter hatred; and he can remain impassive at a thought which formerly would have spurred him to action, as

though of his own accord.'[1] A detachment has to be evenly kept up, not in the order of natural activities adapted to natural ends, but also in the spiritual activities adapted to spiritual ends. This detachment is necessary for the seeker, is natural in the adept and is inherent in the divine. Detachment makes the complete transcendence possible. Expression is of the infinite life, but the detachment keeps the infinite always transcendent. Detachment is the law of spiritual life, and the more detached is the life from its expression, the more it enjoys the transcendent being. Attachment brings in absorption in expression and makes the self confined to the expressive being. In spiritual life, especially when such life is sought in its completeness, the least attachment is dangerous, however high and subtle the expression may be. A complete detachment in every order of expression from urges of spiritual self keeps the path of progress and fulfilment always open, and by detachment alone the adept can possess a mastery over the urges. Spiritual attractions are attractions of the concrete life, and unless these can be overcome and

[1] Steiner, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, p. 112.

received with a transcendent detachment, the highest wisdom cannot be attained. In the life of wisdom, detachment is a great help and a fine asset.

Even in the life of expression detachment admits of a greater possibility of the infusion of spirit in our being and affords a greater delight of apprehending the move of life. It gives us the complete knowledge of spiritual life which is not possible in the actual enjoyment of the expression and in the absorption. Detachment from the natural urges puts us in the stream, detachment from the spiritual urges lands us on the shore. Detachment is the immediate accessory to wisdom.

The importance of the latter kind of detachment is not often felt, for the freedom from the natural urges gives such an expansion of being that more often the adept, by the contrast of an overwhelming experience, thinks that the consummation is reached. The danger that dogs the ascent to this height is that the adept is overpowered with delight and cannot pursue the search further. The upward urge which has influenced him is still at work and never forsakes him, but if the seeker is satisfied, it cannot look up to and catch the still higher urge and therefore rests content with the delight of the spiritual expression.

But this confinement cannot long remain, if the attitude of detachment is still pursued. A detached enjoyment of spiritual possibilities allows the delight, but still lets the spirit remain free. The value of freedom on this plane cannot be overrated. Freedom generally saves the spirit from natural inclinations, but this gift is not very high as inclinations do not belong to the spirit and hence the soul naturally stands aloof. It requires ordinary powers of discrimination and dissociation to save it from the entanglements of natural self. But the freedom from spiritual possibilities is difficult inasmuch as these possibilities are of the concrete spiritual life and not of nature; it is only natural for the seeker to identify spiritual life with these possibilities and to be overcome by them. This is a positive danger, it obstructs the deeper immerging into spirit.

Happily when the spiritual life is far advanced the higher and upward urge never fails, and the finest urge works and reveals itself in complete detachment from the charms of the concrete life and instals the soul in the calm. The soul is thus enthroned in wisdom.

Detachment preserves self-consciousness up to the transcendental height and can acquaint the adept with what the Gītā calls the avyakta, the

unmanifest and the transcendent. The Gītā does not deny this aspect of spiritual life and it adds that such an ascent is not easily attained.[1] And naturally so, for this requires the high water mark of self-consciousness to be pursued even when the finest expression in spirit has been reached.

Ruysbroeck conceives such a state in mystic exaltation. 'The fruition,' says Ruysbroeck, 'is wild and desolate as a desert and therein is to be found no way, no road, no track, no retreat, no measure, no beginning, no end, nor any other thing that can be told in words. And this is for all of us simple blessedness, the essence of God and our super-essence, above reason and beyond reason. To know it we must be in it, beyond the mind and above our created being; in that Eternal Point where all our lines begin and end, that Point where they lose their name and all distinction and become one with the Point itself, and that very one which the Point is, yet nevertheless ever remain in themselves nought else but lines that come to an end.[2]'

Indeed the plane is so high that even the highest amongst the mystics naturally fight shy of

[1] *Vide* Gītā, chap. xii. 5.
[2] *Ruysbroeck*. By E. Underhill, 167–168.

such an existence, for it is the passing of the dew-drops into the ocean, where the delight of the personal self is no longer enjoyed, nor the delight of the urges divine. Life is displaced here by silence, delight by quietude.[1]

[1] *Vide* Gītā, chap. viii. 21.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT

The Concrete Spiritual Life—the Divine-man of the Gītā—Superman—a Comparison—Incarnation (Avatāra)—Divine Descent and Interference.

THE CONCRETE SPIRITUAL LIFE

THE chief attraction of the teachings of the Gītā lies in the stress which it lays upon the concrete spiritual ideal. The concrete life is a life of irresistible will, unbounded power, all-embracing love and illuminated vision. Will is no longer the servant of desire, it is the outward expression of a divine purpose. Irresistible it is, because it moves by a cosmic urge. Love is the concrete expression of the infinite in the finite. The infusion of the divine into man makes the spiritual life in him unbounded and wide in its expression and embrace. Love is not blind and can give its ready assent to will to regularize natural forces and make them subservient to spiritual ends. Illumination feeds soul with light and fills it with life, for spirit is light and life.

Man, with his finite powers and intelligence, dies to be born into divine life, not with a

sense of division, but with the vision that the spirit immanent is the one being. When the natural clogs of the soul are removed with the sense of a false division and a separate being, it begins to function with the spontaneity, ease, and freedom of divine life. Intelligence becomes intuitive, life free, and feeling cosmic.

THE DIVINE-MAN OF THE GITA

So we call him when the soul is no longer subordinate to and stands above natural urges. The divine-man has the cosmic purpose revealed to him and is led by a cosmic impelling amidst the silence of transcendence.

The spiritual fulfilment is reached when the soul is responsive to the dynamic divine and fully conscious of the spiritual transcendence. When this rare mingling of the silence of transcendence with the stirring of dynamic divine is attained, the concrete fulfilment is reached in spiritual life. The Master seems equally anxious to make the two meet in spiritual realization, for so long as the concrete consciousness runs, it cannot lightly brush aside the meaning and importance of cosmic stirrings, nor can it be forgetful of the spiritual height of transcendence, its quiet, strength and truth.

When this happy and desirable end is reached the height of spiritual life is attained. The adept stands on the meeting point and combines the two in him.

SUPERMAN

The ideal which the Gītā presents for the seeker is to realize the possibilities in him by a vigorous discipline. When these possibilities are realized, man becomes a superman. The superman is not necessarily a man of powerful intellect, irresistible will and driving force. However fine are a man's natural endowments, however great are his powers, he is still a man. No doubt, evolution in his case has gone a step forward, still the forces which are active in him and impel him are forces of nature which he manipulates in thousand ways. The superman of nature is nature's product. Nature endows him with uncommon powers which he puts to his own use, though it has the appearance sometimes of cosmic service. The 'little child' in him is still active and he cannot deny nature's urges because they are too strong for him. His intellect is discursive, wisdom prudential, will deliberative. He is the man of the world, though he has the natural endowment to

shake off the word's dust and put on the appearance of a transcendental personality. Such supermen are always active in human history, for nature in her evolution brings forth such types. They have will prominent in them, and the extensive exercise and functioning of will give them the appearance of dynamic personality. Similarly the natural endowment of intellect may create wonder and excite admiration by the subtlety of intellect. But such powers of will and intellect still cling to the self and have not the ease and freedom that characterize the spiritual man.

A Comparison

Friedrich Nietzsche recognizes the will to power as the great incentive in man. 'Wherever I found a living thing there I found Will into Power. . . . That which is believed by people to be good and evil betrayeth unto me an old will to power. It is ye, ye wisest men, who placed their valuations in the boat on the river of becoming and gave them pomp and proud names, ye and your running will.'[1] Nietzsche has in him the vision of the eternal becoming of life and his superman is one who can

[1] *Vide Thus Spake Zarathustra.*

seize the opportunities offered by this flow of life at the right moment and use them to his advantage. In his *Beyond Good and Evil* he has it 'The higher man must be ready for the right moment. . . . Genius is not perhaps so rare as the five hundred hands for seizing the opportunity by the forelock.'[1]

Nietzsche's superman is essentially a moving power. In Neitzsche's words, 'the superman is the meaning of the earth'. 'I conjure you, my brethren, remain true to the earth and do not believe those who speak unto you the hopes beyond this earth'.[2]

The shortcoming of Nietzsche's conception lies essentially in conceding to the urges of blind will and making reason subservient to will. Will undefined and uncontrolled is an urge of life and cannot reach its finer oscillations in evolution.

The will-to-power is, no doubt, an egoistic urge of life, but Neitzsche has been bold enough to declare that egoism belongs to the essence of noble souls.[3] This conception cannot appeal as

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil—X. On the Way to the Height.*
[2] *Vide Thus spake Zarathustra.*
[3] Vide *Beyond Good and Evil*, Egoism.

the vision of Neitzsche does not proceed beyond the vital-animal urge of human life.

The divine-man is a man of power, a man of faith and a man of intuition. The flow of life in him is the flow of spirit. The power he commands is the power of spiritual life, and the ends he serves are the cosmic ends. His superiority lies in receiving the finest urges of spirit and controlling the lower urges by them.

The divine-man of the Gītā is busy evolving a fine society, purifying human souls and opening up opportunities for making life holy and righteous. To this end the spiritual urge is powerful enough to kill the lower forces either in nature or in man, if transformation becomes impossible. The Gītā has indeed inculcated the necessity of meeting the blind forces by blind forces under the direction of spirit and putting an end to them. The blind forces are surely to be overthrown, before spirit can reveal itself in its effective expression through individual and society. The natural urge in man, however potential, has limited capacity and application; the divine urge in man has unlimited capacity and application. And, since man feels the compelling force of the divine urge, he is no longer troubled by the perplexities of conscience. Occasions arise in

the cosmic evolution when the timid conscience of the meek is weakness and not power, and when the divine urge materializes itself through ways and means which appear to the common intelligence as not sanctified by the inner moral sense. 'Resist not evil' is the cry of the meek soul, for the dark forces are sometimes too powerful to be met by love. Love cannot work with such forces and requires a fine evolution before its force and power can be felt and realized. Conservation of values requires that in evolution the evil should either transform its nature or die a natural death, and amidst the conflict of values, the spiritual finality cannot but work towards evolving finer constructions and conserving finer values. The divine urge in nature and man has in it the necessity of refusing and killing the opposing dark forces before it can evolve the finer humanity. Man, if he is the spark of the divine light, should work to this end. In working out the divine plan, he is humble and brave, meek and forceful as the occasion demands and the purpose requires. Nothing in him is all-too-human; nothing, therefore, comes under the judgment of a human ethical code. And, oftener than not, the divine man is a perplexity, for he is not

guided by the prevailing morals. The urge which works in him is not covered by a code which follows the fashion but does not see enough. The divine life is often a mystery, for all the urges of divine life have not been revealed to man, and the mystic knows that it always fulfils itself through what appears to the human insight as an apparent contradiction. It also transcends the contradiction. The prevailing distinction of evil and good has no meaning for such a life. Strictly speaking, morality is a human virtue and is true of the divided life. The absolute or the divine life, is supra-moral and the categories of the common morality have no place in it. The conception of supra-moral does not take away from the essence of moral life; but it certainly takes away from it the conception of good as we understand it. The divine life is busy expressing the highest form of righteousness which lies inherent in its nature. The divine life often creates wonder and admiration and sometimes surprise and perplexity in man. To measure the immeasurable is a hopeless task, and to limit the divine ways is a false expectation. But the divine life is not capricious in its activity. It has a law which at times appears a perplexity to

all but the adept, for they see but cannot see enough. Their evolution has not been such as to enable them to catch the glimpse of the divine purpose and the divine law. The evolution is constantly at work, and the old order imperceptibly changes; occasions arise when the evolution has to be quickened and the forces gather themselves and work simultaneously with a rapidity.

INCARNATION (AVATARA)

The divine-man is the avatāra. The avatāra is to be distinguished from inspired agents. The upward urge in the inspired agent quickens his evolution to such a pitch as makes the direct infusion of the divine life possible. Evolution reaches its height in him. His being is in direct contact and intimate touch with the divine life, though it has its expression in his environment. The divine-man always bathes in the sunshine of infinite life; the divine force in him is the infinite life.

Sometimes this possession of the infinite may be only occasional, sometimes it may be durable. Be it noted here that this possession has a greater implication than an intellectual consciousness and illumination. It is the direct ingress of infinite life.

The occasional possession inspires the soul and causes the subtle forces to work.[1] Such a possession catches hold of the disciple in the field of action. And this possession is not direct, it takes place through the intervention of the Master. Such momentary and occasional possession cannot continue long, for the influence filters in through intervention. It comes through an external agency and goes out when the occasion and the purpose are over. No doubt, such souls must possess fitness for election, but even this fitness is not enough to make them recipients of the divine urges.

The constant reception of the infinite spirit is the rarest possibility and the highest consummation, and this privilege can be attained only by a correct search and a vigorous discipline. The mental-physical body must be fine enough to be a fit vehicle of a life highly potential with spirituality. The mystic end—the constant fellowship with the divine and the fusion of the infinite

[1] *Vide* Sir Oliver Lodge 's *Science and Human Progress*, p. 93: ' Every leader of mankind, every man who has deeply influenced his generation and has accomplished great acts whatever the admixture of good and bad in his composition, must have had before him, perhaps frequently, perhaps only at times, some sense of Divine Purpose and Mission entrusted to him.'

life with its high possibilities—becomes actual where the soul passes through a course of spiritual evolution in previous lives to make it a fit vehicle of the constant in-dwelling of the spirit and the most effective expression of it. In the spiritual evolution the soul by its culture and discipline transforms its vehicles and assimilates a fit body from nature. When the earthly vehicle and the finer bodies are formed out of the finest matter the spirit finds the body ready for the utmost expansion and the widest expression. Anyhow for the highest spiritual possibility the adept should draw from the finest modification of nature. The yogic adepts practically draw from matter its finest essence to form a body that can long continue even after the flesh is cast off. The Vaiṣṇava teachers draw a distinction between the body thus reared up by spiritual discipline and the spiritual body of the spirit. The former is an acquirement through evolution, the latter an expression of spirit. The Vaiṣṇavas consider the possibility of the spirit taking a spiritual form. Whatever be the exact value of such an affirmation, it surely points out the height of spiritual evolution. The quickening of spiritual life causes elimination of the rajas and the infusion of sattva. The process can be carried to such a fineness that rajas gradually

disappears and life begins to manifest the finest current of sattva, and the process continues until the finest essence of spirit can have its effective expression. The śuddha-sāttvic expression is finer in essence than the sattvic expression and is naturally free from the limitation of the latter due to constant association with rājasic impelling. In spiritual elevation it is not impossible then to acquire a body which has the shining expression of the spirit. The thin distinction between the shining form and spirit is not felt and perceived in the intensity of illuminating form, and this has been the ground of the conclusion that the spirit has a body. The conception of spiritual body is a commonplace amongst mystics.[1] Such a spiritual body is a necessary associate of the spirit in its concentration, for concentration is really grafting a form upon the formless; and this spiritual form is freely chosen and fully used. Spiritual diffusion in its highest expanse dispenses with form-consciousness. Spiritual concentration takes on form-consciousness, if not always, at least, occasionally. Mystic science conceives thoughts to have forms, will to have

[1] *Vide* Rudolf Steiner's *Knowledge of the Higher World and Its Attainment.*

shapes and spirit to have subtle forms. Nature is at its command and spirit can take any form from nature at its will.[1] But this expression through form is an appearance, for matter cannot touch spirit, though spirit can take a material garb. This expression through shining matter (the mystic sees the finer modifications of matter which science cannot conceive) is what the Gītā calls divya-jñāna and karma. When the soul can attain such fineness in evolution, it forms a body at its will from prakṛti.

The adept who has attained a high degree of evolution feels the perfect freedom of the soul which always maintains its transcendence even in its intimate association with prakṛti. The ignorance which binds the soul to the material form is lost, and the soul sees itself ever free. When such a state is reached, the soul can rise to the height of an on-looker or a controller of prakṛti.

This power is acquired in adepts and inherent in Īśvara. The trained and the fit are, therefore, in constant touch with the infinite and are to be distinguished from those who have occasional illuminations and transitory infusion of the divine life. They are the elect. They have a fitness,

[1] *Vide* chap. iv. 6.

but not a fitness to be in constant tune. They have occasional lapses and occasional inspirations.

The more advanced souls are in constant touch with the divine life, fit and prepared as they are for the purpose. They have passed through finer evolutions. They have spiritual elevation. Doubts do not cross them, hazy perceptions do not disturb them. They are in constant enjoyment of the infinite life. They move on with the cosmic force. They see distinctly and feel clearly the divine adaptations and direct forces unfailingly to success. These are greater than world-figures, who are mere toys in their hands. They inspire less adapted souls and guide them without their knowledge to ends beyond their conception and reach. These are the Masters. They inspire all the lesser spirits to action on the physical plane.

If in spiritual ascent there is a possibility of direct or indirect inspiration, still, strictly speaking, an avatāra connotes the descent of the divine in the world order, the avowed purpose being to 'give protection to the righteous and to destroy the unrighteous and to establish the glory of Dharma.'[1] The Gītā distinctly supports the theory

[1] *Vide* chap. iv. 8.

of divine interference in the cosmic regulation. The order is holy; and when the time is ripe, the divine descent is necessary to keep up the order against the forces of unrighteousness and disruption. All commentators have lent support to the theory of divine descent. Saṁkara writes, 'The Divinity without any purpose of its own, but mainly out of pity for the creatures, spontaneously assumes a shining form.'[1] Madhu Sūdhan Sarasvati has the same conclusion. The concrete form of the Divinity is more apparent than real and is a concession and favour to humanity. This figure is a transformation of the pure sattva of māyā at the will of God.[2] The form emerges out of the essence of māyā in its causal aspect. The theists think that the Divinity has a spiritual form inherent in it, and the descent is possible in this form. The spiritual descent, therefore, has not been denied by any school The descent in the concrete form has been explained in different ways. The Saṁkarites and the Vaiṣṇavites make the divine form a temporary appearance in the māyic world. But the Saṁkarites deny it in the spiritual order; the Vaiṣṇavites accept it therein.

[1] *Vide* Introduction to *Saṁkara's Commentary*.
[2] *Vide Madhu Sudhan's Commentary* on chap. iv. 6.

Such a descent is called Avatāra. Avatāra is then Divinity in human form. Saṁkara attributes the descent to Īśvara, the theistic teachers to the supreme Godhead. In the former case the descent is from the causal to the effectual order; in the latter it is from the spiritual to the natural order. The theory of descent, therefore, has a greater significance for the Vaiṣṇavas than for the Saṁkarites.

Avatāra, therefore, is God in form and in flesh. This God is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Vaiṣṇavic doctrine has a close resemblance to the 'most profound mystery of the Christian faith,' namely, the doctrine of Incarnation. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.'[1] This Word is Christ. The Vaiṣṇavic persuasion of the Bhāgavata School makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Godhead, in majesty perfect and in sweetness full.

Divine Descent and Interference

There are moments when the divine force becomes active. It introduces effective changes in human affairs and ushers in new epochs in human history. Such interference is rare and

[1] *Vide* St. John's Gospel.

possible only when the active forces are ripe enough to respond to the call.

Spiritual forces are ordinarily at work, and the divine-man intervenes to set a new order of values, to give a new turn of life to suit the necessities of the spiritual evolution at certain epochs in the progress of human society. The ideas and values of an age do not fit the requirements of another age, and in the constant changes of life new values are set on the new meanings of life. New methods are adopted to fulfil them. And it is because of this that the spiritual life does not always tread the beaten track, and its elasticity allows it a diversity of expression. Spiritual life is an adventure inasmuch as it soars into the unseen and intangible. Great changes and new adventures in spiritual life are made possible by the divine-man.

Kṛṣṇa

There are verses which apparently speak of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa[1] and the theistic interpreters[2] utilize these verses in favour of the Godhead of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual form of the divine.

[1] *Vide* Gītā, vii. 24 ; iv. 11, 23, 24, 52.
[2] E.g. Valadeo.

Kṛṣṇa is the fleshy incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Bengal theists, Chaitanya and his followers, following the Nārada Pañçarātra theory makes Viṣṇu a hypostasis of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the divinity.

AN ESTIMATE

The direct interference is not accepted by Saṁkara. It is accepted by Vaiṣṇavas. Interference, direct or indirect, is occasionally called for to set the spirit of holiness active in the cosmic order. Evolution is constantly working for spirituality and holiness, and it has to retard the influence of evil. Evolution means a certain amount of opposition which the force of good has to meet and as such it implies a limitation. Evolution of spiritual values cannot transcend this limitation. Prof. Whitehead says, 'The limitation of God is his goodness.' The concrete concentration of spirit is, in Prof. Whitehead's words, 'something decided and is thereby limited.' The descent, therefore, of God naturally suffers a limitation and the Divinity cannot clearly manifest itself and has the look of the force of good counteracting the forces of limitation. 'In his infinitude God will embrace evil as well as good, and this unlimited fusion of evil with good

means the denial of them both in the Absolute.'[1] Incarnation, therefore, calls for the personality of God and his intervention in the world-affairs is to help the evolution of spirituality and holiness. It is consistent with the life of spiritual concentration.

But the direct descent calls for the theory of pre-established harmony and the separateness of God from the world which seems to be in direct contradiction to the explicit immanence of God, so eloquently preached in the Gītā. Puruṣottama pervades the world, and the intervention occasionally does contradict this embrace and immanence.

Though the descent of Puruṣottama in a form can hardly be accepted, still there is no difficulty in conceiving the intercession of Puruṣottama through a fit vehicle and medium. This is more rational and is in consonance with the teachings of the Gītā.[2] 'Whatever you know to be full in greatness and prowess, know that to be inspired by and infused with, my spirit.' The Divinity residing in the heart of things shapes the course of events, and where the medium is fine enough to reflect the divinity in

[1] *Vide* Whitehead, *Religion in Making*.
[2] *Vide* chap. x. 41.

its power, majesty and holiness, it comes to be associated with the divine dignity ; and truly so, for it has a unique fitness, which others lack, for receiving and transmitting divine influence. Such centres stand out as the hallowed and the majestic few. This conclusion is natural and in keeping with the evolution in spirit. Spirit in man is in evolution, and naturally, the fit have glimpses of spiritual life better than the unfit. Though the immanence of God calls for the unity of spiritual self, still the immanence does not stand in the way of the inner evolution and assimilation of the spiritual powers in the individual self. Immanence is the embrace of spirit. Spiritual life has its greatest expression, so far as an expression is possible through a concrete life. It receives because it is in constant tune with and occasionally can merge in the expansive spiritual life. Spiritual life is elastic enough to receive in wise passivity and to give in unfettered activity. The wide vision and the concentration of powers mark out adepts from the rest of the souls and endow them with halo and dignity. Such souls are Divinity expressed, so far as it is expressible through humanity.

GLOSSARY

Bhāgavat-Gītā ... The Song Divine—the message delivered by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna.[1]

Brahman ... The indeterminate Absolute.

Caitanya ... The inspired teacher of Vaiṣṇavism of Bengal.

Chhāndogya ... One of the important Upaniṣads.

Dharma ... Literally, 'that which holds.' In the Gītā, it has different shades of meaning. They are :—

(*a*) Dharma in the sense of duties imposed by the station of life ;

(*b*) Dharma in the sense of piety ;

(*c*) Dharma in the sense of inner discipline.

All these three terms are comprehended under the wider sense of a principle that helps the evolution of the individual and the race. The special meaning varies according to the context.

[1] The Gītā is a chapter of the famous Indian epic, the Mahābhārata. The war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas (the sons of Pāṇḍu and Kuru) is the main theme of the epic. Arjuna is the third Pāṇḍava prince. Kṛṣṇa is the inspired teacher of Arjuna.

Īśvara	...	The concrete Unity of Godhead, the Eternal Spring of majesty, virility, excellence, power and wisdom.
Hatha-yoga	...	The composite discipline of the physical and the vital bodies. It consists of different kinds of postures and different methods of controlling the breath. It is accessory to the higher forms of mind and thought control.
Karmic—Karmika	...	Relating to Karma.
Karma	...	Generally, activity, specially, activity on the physical, mental and vital planes.
Lokāyata	...	The School of Indian Materialists.
Mimaṁsa	...	The system of philosophy propounded by Jaimini, which chiefly deals with Karma.
Madhusudan Sarasvati.		The commentator on the Gita belonging to the Absolute monistic school of Saṁkara.
Om	...	The verbal symbol of Brahman.
Prakṛti	...	The unconscious creative principle.
Prāṇa	...	The vital energy.
Prāṇic—Prāṇika	...	Concerning the vital energy.
Prāṇāyāma	...	Regulation of Prāṇa.
Rajas	...	The vibrative element of Prakṛti.
Rājasika	...	Relating to Rajas.

Sāṁkhya	...	One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy—established by Kapila. The Indian system of dualism.
Śraddhā	...	The reverential attitude which reveals Truth.
Sattva	...	The luminous element of Prakṛti.
Sāttvic	...	Sāttvika—relating to Sattva.
Saraṇāpatti	...	Refuge in God.
Tāmasic	...	Tamasika—relating to Tamas.
Tapas	...	Mental and physical austerities.
Upaniṣads	...	The original texts of the Vedānta, the end of the Vedas.
Vāsanāyāma	...	The control of desires.
Visvanāth Chakravarttī.		The commentator on the Gītā, belonging to the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism.
Yoga	...	Generally means discipline, specially a system of philosophy and mental discipline taught by Patanjali.
Yogic—Yogika	...	Relating to Yoga.

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